REPRESENTATIONS OF THE OTHER IN SELECTED WORKS OF JOSEPH CONRAD

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Victoria Amma Agyeiwaah Osei-Bonsu

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines how Otherness/ alterity is represented in Joseph Conrad's writing through an exploration of a selection of three of his works, namely *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*. Drawing on notions of alterity and the Other as espoused in postcolonial discourse (which is subsumed under poststructuralism and postmodernism), it sets out to demonstrate that, in his writing, Joseph Conrad deploys of a formulaic technique of Othering that could be traced, to a greater of lesser degree, across all his writing.

It proceeds from the premise that Conrad's writing engages with an abiding concern with the individual's construction of an identity in relation to his society. From this perspective, it investigates issues of race and culture as they relate to identity within the contested terrain of social space. Drawing on theories of identity and representation propounded by Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Stuart Hall, and reading these in tandem with Edward Soja's theories of space and place, this study proposes an identification of Otherness through an examination of intra-colonial relations and/or encounters that help to reveal how the Othered characters are constructed within the structures of their own social systems.

In addition to demonstrating how the Other is revealed through the selected texts, this study also yields insights into the possibility of perceiving the Other through a 'thirdsight' perspective. Having developed this concept of 'thirdsight', I theorise it as a possibility of perception triangulated through the various narrative perspectives that are presented, either subtly or overtly, in the texts. Through thirdsight, it then becomes possible for the reader to arrive at alternative and plausible meanings that sustain my overall argument that Conrad demonstrates an abiding interest in representing varying forms of Otherness in his writing.

Representations of the Other in Selected Works of Joseph Conrad

Victoria Osei-Bonsu

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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE OTHER IN SELECTED WORKS OF JOSEPH CONRAD

INTRODUCTION

Joseph Conrad's writing has persistently featured in critical literary studies, especially of the sort related to the phenomenology and the hermeneutics of the subject. As a result, the budding Conrad scholar is often tempted to wonder what more one can say about him that has not already been said. To partly deal with this anxiety of influence, I begin my study by attempting to respond to D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke's question: "In what respects does he matter to us?" (11). To this, I venture the argument that due to Conrad's compelling style and the intriguing perspective from which he presents different facets of his narrative with an unrelenting focus on the constitution of the human subject as a social being, his works remain relevant for studies that aim to examine the identity of individuals or groups of persons as they relate to others within a social order. Since this statement seems to posture towards a more sociological or anthropological enquiry, a more precise question would be: how is Conrad relevant to today's discussions in the humanities or in literary and cultural studies? In this regard, I invoke F. R. Leavis' conceptualisation of canonical writings making up *The Great Tradition* (1948) of English Literature in which he includes Conrad as a core member. Besides, Conrad's writings, that essentially treat and depict the human subject as influenced in various ways by social, political, cultural and economic factors, often serve as a point of reference for sustained contemporary debates about the representation of race and difference in literature. For a close reading of his texts reveals an overall scepticism regarding the accepted principles upon which the universe, constructed primarily on polarity, is organised. In such a universe heavily impacted by what Edward Said has identified as a "mixture of cultures and identities" consolidated by imperialism (*Culture and Imperialism* 407), there are indeed no pure forms of identity as the subject, impacted by various experiences, emerges as bearing a very complex nature. Consequently, texts like Conrad's that provoke an interrogation of what it means to be one subject or another earn a claim to lasting relevance. If such an argument for Conrad's hermeneutics of the subject does not sufficiently answer Goonetilleke's query, I add that, from a global historico-political context, Conrad's writing reflects a dialectical convergence of colonial, modernist and postcolonial discourses, that remain pertinent to our times. While this perspective may connote the

idea that Conrad demonstrates a sense of astuteness in his writing that causes his works to transcend his time, it also impresses upon us the fact that it is in placing Conrad within his historical and literary-historical context that we may be able to essentially grasp his meaning. Thus, it is from the convergence of historical and political manifestations upon his writing that we may perceive him as speaking to the present through a critique of the accepted myths of the colonial rhetoric of his time. Among such myths is the sustained notion of a social hierarchy which predicates the prevalence of one human subject over another, constituting the subordinate subject as inferior to the presumed superior. In the dynamics of social relations and of the positioning of the subject within a social order, the formation of such social hierarchies, based on race, class or gender, casts inferiority as aberrant, and even potentially jeopardising to the presumed standard. In being thus considered as an alteration of the standard, the inferior subject is essentially constituted as an Other.

Determining the specificity of this Other in Conrad's writing is the focus of my study. To do this, I draw generally on notions of alterity, concepts of Othering, and on studies about the construction of the Other to identify and examine characters that may be inadvertently Othered in the selected texts. For instance, Rachel Hollander, in her analysis of *Under Western Eyes* from Emmanuel Levinas' perspective of ethics and politics towards the Other, asserts that Conrad, in that novel, "establishes Russia as an abyssal space of otherness" (1) in which Razumov, "(the embodiment of that abyss)" (9), faces the challenge of defining his identity and purpose within ethical limits of an otherwise dysfunctional system. Also in a Levinasian reading of *Lord Jim*, Agata Kowol observes that Jim's persistent failure resulting from his lack of alertness and preparedness for life's contingencies "renders him an other not only to his comrades, or the external world, but also to himself" (145). Such epigrammatic conceptualisations of alterity derived from perspectival readings of Conrad's texts provide the theoretical foundation for my own analysis as I work out how Otherness is represented in Conrad's writing.

In a further exploration of how Conrad constructs his Othered characters, I turn my lens on intra-colonial relations/ encounters depicted between characters within the texts. This focus enables me to demonstrate how the characters that I identify as Othered are impacted in their Otherness by such encounters. In many colonial/ postcolonial analyses, the major debates on encounters that engender alterity are often centred on colonial-metropolitan, or master-subject relations that are characteristic of imperial endeavours. Therefore, my shift in focus to interrogate

these intra-colonial relations and encounters in Conrad's writing will contribute to highlighting the latent functions of such encounters which have been much understudied. In effect, the surplus value of examining these relations and encounters is that such an analysis consolidates the fact that Otherness in Conrad's writing is not only constructed through the master narrative of imperialist discourse which depicts Otherness primarily through economic and political relations of power, but that it is also indicated and reinforced through everyday social relations and a failure to comply to standardising notions implied within an ostensibly analogous universe.

OTHERNESS / ALTERITY

In debates within literary and cultural studies, the notion of the Other has been employed in various ways. It is used to define the quality of being different from an established social norm or standard. It also indicates the distinction that people make between themselves and others in terms of a difference that may be sexual (Irigaray 1977), ethnic (Said 1978; Spivak 1985, 1987, 2000; Hall 1997), or relational: phenomenological (Waldenfels 1997), ethical (Levinas 1994), (post-)colonial (Bhabha 1997, 2005). The term has had an impressive career within the humanities and the social sciences as Bernhard Waldenfels (1997; 2011), for example, examines it as a response to the Other that pre-exists the subject. In his conception of human existence in terms of a social order, he distinguishes three intersecting levels, namely, "the order of selfhood, the order of social collectivity, and the order of reason" (Waldenfels 2011, 14-15). These three levels place the subject in a relation with the Other through a demand to respond, or interact, with that Other at every level of its existence. A related, but earlier exploration of the term from such a relational perspective can be attributed to Emmanuel Levinas (1969, 1994) whose examination of the ethical relation between the self and the Other emphasises the responsibility toward the Other embedded within this relationship. In his theorisation of the concept he states: "I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an 'I', precisely because I am exposed to the other. it is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that make me an individual 'I'" (Levinas 62). In this conceptualisation of the 'I' as contingent on the Other, Levinas demonstrates that the self or the ego cannot exist without the Other, the ethical implication being, therefore, that a devaluation of the Other constitutes a devaluation of the self. In relation to this, he asserts that "[i]n ethics, the other's right to exist has primacy over my own" (Levinas 60). In effect, Levinas' ethical dimension sets the Other as superior to the self in a relationship of intersubjectivity. This notion of the place

and the role of the Other in terms of intersubjectivity is neither new nor radical as it persists also in the area of existential philosophy where the term is employed to define the intersubjective relations between persons that result in the creation of self-awareness and in the production of ideas of identity.

Although I often allude to these notions of intersubjectivity with and responsibility toward the Other, for the purposes of my study, I defer to the general use of the term as it is employed in postcolonial theory where its definition is rooted in the psychoanalytic tradition of a Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the construction of subjectivity (Ashcroft et al 186). Drawing on this tradition, the term, as conceptualized by Jacques Lacan (1966; 1968), exists in two distinct forms: the other with a small 'o' and the Other with a capital 'O'. In Lacan's distinction, the other (small 'o') is a reflection and a projection of the ego, or the self. It resembles the self and thereby fosters a recognition or an identification through which it becomes aware of itself as a separate being. This results in its aspiration to selfhood through the formation of an identity, based on its recognition and awareness of existence as a social being within a symbolic order. In Lacan's notion, such a self-recognition and awareness is facilitated as the emerging subject passes through the mirror stage which serves as the primal scene of the construction of the other who identifies his autonomy from the self. In postcolonial theory, "this other is important in defining the identity of the subject", who could be the colonised subject "marginalized by imperial discourse" (Ashcroft et al 187). The Other (capital 'O') refers to a radical alterity to which the 'standard' subject denies any form of identification (Wolfreys 62). In postcolonial criticism, this struggle for identification often presupposes a "primitive and degraded subject of imperial discourse" in need of validation from the Symbolic Other or the Imperial Other through the nurturing (maternal) and regulatory (patriarchal) functions of the colonising power (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 188). As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin observe, "both these processes of 'othering' occur at the same time" resulting simultaneously in the creation of the dominant imperial Other and the subordinate colonial other (188). In my conceptualisation of the term for my study, I subscribe to all of these notions of alterity which serve as viable points of departure for analysing the Others that emerge from the selected texts. However, throughout the study, I use the term 'Other' (with a capital 'O') for two main reasons. The first of these is to refer to radical alterity as indicated by Levinas and Waldenfels; and the second is to pinpoint the constructedness of the 'Other'. In effect, my use of the term 'Other' implies that subject, or entity, that is indicated for difference, marginality and

exclusion from an imagined centre based on its non-conformity to a standard. I, therefore, implicitly demonstrate in my study that Conrad's Othered subject is not always (or essentially) primitive or degraded but is Othered within the context of his social relations. From this notion, I examine such subjects as bearing a condition or quality of Otherness, or alterity (used interchangeably with Otherness), which manifests as difference from an accepted social identity. Besides, I use the action term 'to Other' to indicate the reductive labelling of a person as deviating from an accepted norm, resulting in exclusion from the centre that represents the standard. Coined by Gayatri Spivak (1985a) to refer to the social and / or psychological methods by which one group of people excludes or marginalizes another group, the term Othering indicates the processes deployed by imperial discourse to assert its superiority and create its 'others' (Spivak 251-270). As I examine the Conrad texts selected for this study, these terms and notions of alterity and Othering come in handy, as they help me to investigate the modes of Othering used in the texts and how, through a typology of such Othering modes, certain characters can be considered Others.

To explore these issues in Conrad's works, I begin from the premise that Otherness is not necessarily strangeness. It has, however, been used to characterise the Othered subject as different, definitely different from the Self. This difference could be interpreted in terms of religion, sexual identity/orientation, and ethnicity. In an earlier study on the subject of Otherness, Osei-Bonsu, (2008) demonstrates that in 16th century English literature the other is captured as so different from the norm that it is presented as strange and even monstrous (21). Further showing that this strangeness was often linked to evil or to a tendency to cause harm, she cites Caliban from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as an example of this type of monstrous or potentially dangerous other (21). However, as she further traces the representation of othering in literature, she indicates that by the late 18th century, the other is portrayed as simply different in the sense that it lacks some natural attribute or condition that makes it deviate from the norm without necessarily being frightful or strange. As she shows with examples from a selection of English texts - including *Ozymandias*, *The Little Black Boy*, and *The Indian Girl's Song* – the newly emerged other of this period bears a sort of exotic nature and may be excluded from what is considered normal society merely because of its difference (22). However, by the early 20th century – which marks Conrad's era – the identity of the other is no longer as homogenous as it seems to have remained until this time and it becomes possible to detect a differentiation, initially subtle but progressively more pronounced, between different kinds of others. There remains the exotic other simply marked by

difference as is represented in the dark-skinned stranger/outsider of the 19th century exemplified by such a character as Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. This other emerges as the oriental other who is fascinating for its exotic nature and who is "considered potentially equal to the European self" (23). This other is, however, differentiated from the African other, who is depicted as "frightfully brutish and savage" and "must be permanently excluded from the imperial self" (22).

For my approach to Conrad, I extend these processes of differentiation to further a conceptualization of Otherness in which the other that is 'monstrous' is captured as an 'Other' (with a capital 'O'), whereas that which is merely 'strange' is an 'other' (with a small letter 'o'). I further argue that this conceptualization may form the basis for imagining a continuum of Otherness which sets the 'strange/ other' on a lower end of gravity against the 'monstrous/ Other' which would be considered a grimmer form of Otherness. On the premise of such a scale, it is possible for an individual to transform from a mere strangeness which may be disregarded for its inoffensiveness to a monstrosity which transgresses recognition and defies any identification with a norm. This theorisation of the Other, that approximates the African Other in its need to be permanently excluded from the 'standard' self, is at the core of my examination of alterity in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*.

In addition to my own theorisation of Otherness as occurring on a continuum, I also draw heavily on the postcolonial theorisation of alterity in which the Other can be conceptualised in a variety of terms such as the Oriental Other (Said) and the African Other (Mudimbe), the racial Other (Fanon; Spivak; Memmi; Mbembe; Appiah and Gutman; Aidoo; Arendt), and even the sexual Other (feminist discourse including Kristeva; Scott; Bradford; Hawkesworth; Narayan; Pelikan Strauss; Das). Most of these different others are often cast in what can generally be referred to as the oppressed or victimised Other. While Said discusses how the oriental Other is constructed to satisfy the need of the West to assert itself with inferior regard to an Other, Mudimbe takes this discussion further with respect to the African and shows how the 'otherization' of Africa has gone through various stages to create the ultimate Other. In this thesis I take the position that not all European Others are created equal, and that Joseph Conrad's works permit us to elicit a typology of western Othering in which Africa/ the African is the ultimate Other.

CONRAD AND THE POSTCOLONIAL

Many colonial and post-colonial writings demonstrate how the African or Africa itself is constituted as an Other to Europe/ the West. Often, the critical debates that generate around such representations promptly cite Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as the primary example of such a text. However, other less cited texts such as *The Ambiguous Adventure* by Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Mister Johnson* by Joyce Cary and even, to a certain extent, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe convey similar depictions of Otherness. As is evident in Joseph Conrad's works, very often this conception of the African Other is reinforced and endorsed through the discourse of economic/political control and racial superiority over that Other. However, a consideration of the fact that Conrad's writing also depicts European/Western Others prompts us to revisit charges that Conrad is guilty of racialised or racist otherings of African subjects. How do the representations of these other Others compare with the representation of the standardized African Other? These enquiries will serve to initiate an analysis of various Others represented in Conrad's works. A related key question is: Why does Conrad choose the Congo to portray his African Other, and what informs/ influences his geographical choice of other Others? Answering such questions will help us dispel notions of a malicious 'racist' intent in Conrad's portrayal of Africa/ns.

Many arguments have been made for Conrad's racist attitudes towards Africa/ns by focusing on his descriptions of Africans as inferior, particularly in his novella *Heart of Darkness*. Chief among them is Chinua Achebe's influential criticism of Conrad as racist (Achebe 935). Stating that Conrad's writing reflects a Eurocentric way of thinking about Africa/ns, Achebe asserts that Conrad's "preposterous and perverse arrogance in […] reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind" results in the "dehumanisation of Africa and Africans" and "depersonalises a portion of the human race" (935-36). Achebe further states that Africa is Othered through representations such as that of Kurtz's African mistress who is depicted as savage and whose vacant stare is compared to the wilderness while his European intended is a fully developed human being whose humanity is expressed in the emotional expressiveness of her pain, sorrow and loss. Moreover, whereas the Europeans in the narrative are articulate subjects, the Africans are denied this ability and are depicted as 'howling' and 'shrieking' in a "wild and passionate uproar" (*Heart of Darkness* 37). This damning assessment in which Achebe calls Conrad "a bloody racist" (936) has engendered a wide range of reactions. While other postcolonial literary scholars like Niyi Osundare, Eugene B. Redmond, and Terry Eagleton have reiterated

Achebe's sentiments, counter arguments have been staged by critics such as Cedric Watts and J. Hillis Miller who allege that Achebe's charge results from a misplaced analysis, or from what Terry Collits, in reference to such counter arguments, sums up as a "passionate misreading" (Collits 96) of the novella. Countering this suggestion of a possible misreading, Osundare contests that critics who fail to acknowledge Conrad's racism in *Heart of Darkness* contribute to "a complex series of evasions, open-eyed blindness, wilful forgetfulness, or simply, an intellectual and racial connivance with the European novelist" (947). To these debates, I contend that while these pro-racist readings may be a viable way to look at the novella, they do not represent the only way that the text can and should be read and must, therefore, not be allowed to eclipse other acceptable readings of the novella. In this vein, I agree with J. Hillis Miller who contends that there are "ways to read 'Heart of Darkness' that might do harm, for example if it is read as straightforwardly endorsing Eurocentric, racist and sexist ideologies" (474). He, however, points out that a more rewarding reading of the novella will be to evaluate it for its artistic and stylistic techniques that contribute to making it a great piece of literature. In line with this view, he posits that the text is a "masterwork of irony" (476) in which "Conrad's radical irony" (476) subtly addresses sensitive issues related to the negativity of imperialism. Besides its irony, he outlines three other salient features that establish the text as a literary masterpiece that demands to be read just for the merit of its literariness. Thus, Hillis Miller states that it would be heretic to read the text simply as an endorsement of Eurocentrism and proposes how it "should be read" instead. In his opinion, the reader should approach the novella as "a powerful exemplary revelation of the ideology of capitalist imperialism, including its racism and sexism" (474) while paying close attention to its stylistic narration and its "descriptive vividness" (452). Given the fact that such a reading does not completely dismiss the excesses of ideological representations, it is unavoidable that the conscientious reader, influenced by their own ideological leanings, will be struck by the stark representations of one race of people against another. What ideological perspective such a reader chooses to focus on remains, I believe, a matter that one really has no business adjudicating.

Such debates about Conrad's xenophobia persist unabatedly almost half a century after they were sparked by Achebe in 1975, and they show little signs of going away any time soon. However, while this judgement of Conrad as racist has been based on his single text, *Heart of Darkness*, out of his very productive writing career, rather little has been done by way of checking this charge of racism against his depiction of the subjects of other geographical regions, either in

the same novel or in his other works. It is this kind of analysis that I propose to conduct in my study of the Other through a selection of Conrad's works. While I do not aim to absolve Conrad of the charge of racism, I hope that my study will help to situate Conrad's works in the confluence of these earlier, and other contemporary, debates on the Other, and to demonstrate that the author's agenda is hardly racist in essence.

Far from recommending that Conrad's works be read in any particular way, I rather propose a reading that will focus on two main aspects. First, my reading of Conrad should help us think about the political situatedness of his texts. As Collits asserts, Conrad's writings "coincided with an epistemological crisis as well as a crisis of empire" (24) in that the spread of empire, resulting also in a loss of direct regulatory oversight and control in its farthest reaches, also gave rise to an anthropological desire to 'know' – describe and understand – Europe's Other/s in a bid to assert the imperial self. However, as Collits observes, such a quest, like earlier classical quests for the unknown or the forbidden, results in a "futility" that proves, in the face of resounding imperial conquest, a "human limitation more suggestive of tragedy than of militant enlightenment" (Collits 23). Such a desperate lack of knowledge of the empire's Other/s is reflected in Conrad's writing as a groping for a determinate description of subjectivity which, remaining slippery at best, invariably eludes him. This elusion, manifested in Conrad's indeterminacy of description of his subjects, anticipates the human subject's resistance to being politically defined or categorised under the force of conquest, a resistance that is at the heart of postcolonial theoretical discourse and analysis. Thus, Conrad's works, laying bare the atrocities of empire upon territories and subjects, provides the frame of reference for a radical resistance against the violence of (mis/) representation while he writes against colonial conquest. In effect, the representation of Otherness in his works, depicted even at the height of imperial assertiveness, proleptically situates his texts within the theoretical framework of postcolonial discourse which is much concerned with the power relations embedded in the dynamics of representation.

Secondly, I propose a reading that pays more attention to the author's great narrative skill, especially his layered use of point of view and its consequences for the charge of racism. This focus on the formal features of Conrad's texts prompts an interrogation into how his narrative choices relate to the politics of his texts: Does his writing, especially depicting other peoples and cultures as less civilised than Europe, reinforce ethnocentric ideas about these people and cultures?

Does the complexity of his style, including his excessive use of adjectives and fractured sentences, and his combination of framed narratives with narrative distancing through the layering of point of view, insinuate him against the indictment of racism? In Hunt Hawkins' consideration of *Heart of Darkness* as Conrad's advocacy against imperial expansion and its evils, he does not fail to point out the notions of Social Darwinism and its resulting racism that are subtly camouflaged in the text (370-74). In effect, it is evident that in Conrad's efforts to expose and condemn the atrocities of European colonial expansion, he inadvertently reiterates the racist ideologies about Africa/ns that prevailed in his time. Unintentional as that might be, his reproduction of these already existing ideologies does not lessen the effect of their offense. And the notion that he was in fact sensitive to racism as a result of "being subject to it himself" (Hawkins 373) did not seem to make him any less vivid in his racist depictions of others. However, as Abdul JanMohamed observes, despite what critics like Achebe may say about Conrad's graphic treatment of Africa/ns in *Heart of Darkness*, "Africans are an incidental part, and not the main objects of representation, in the novella" (90). Therefore, it is worth making a focal shift from the incidental to the main so as to compare his treatment of Africans with his treatment of other characters of different ethnic origins.

Even in relation to Conrad's treatment of his European characters, Hawkins asserts that racist attitudes were "endemic" in Conrad's era, and that while he may have demonstrated such attitudes himself, "he acidly attacked white racism in his works," depicting "nothing but contempt for white men who claim superiority solely on the basis of their skin color" (373). This is evidenced, for instance, in his treatment of Peter Willems in *An Outcast of the Islands*, whose plea to Lingard to save him from the consequences of his mindless actions is based on his claim to whiteness: "I don't want to die here. […]. Take me away! I am white! All white!" (209). Right from his "Author's Note" that introduces the novel to the reader, Conrad ridicules such a claim to racial superiority by denigrating Willems as being "almost as dumb as an animal and apparently much more homeless" (282). In similar fashion, Donkin in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* who insists on his rights because he is "an Englishman" (6) is also referred to as "a dirty white cockatoo" (68), and is introduced into the narrative looking like a broken-winged bird who "had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud" and "pelted with unmentionable filth" (5). These Othering depictions of Europeans are replicated in much of his writing, including even in *Heart of Darkness* where Kurtz is equally depicted as an Other who succumbs to his "primitive emotion" and is reduced in his fatal sickness to a "hollow sham" (73). For my analysis of Otherness in this study, I proceed

from the premise that, throughout his writing, Conrad stages a politics of resistance to imperialism and its wide-reaching effects on both the colonised and the coloniser, both of whom he depicts as victims of imperial expansion. In support of this proposition, I point out that Conrad's only other text that is set in Africa, *An Outpost of Progress*, was originally titled "A Victim of Progress" (Sewlall 38). That his notion of 'victim' should be replaced by a place – 'outpost' – which brings together the European colonial agents and the African people and setting calls for a close scrutiny of Conrad's staging of 'victimhood' in the short story. Consequently, a close reading of the text, generally considered "a scathing satire of empire" (Sewlall 39), will reveal that the 'victims' implied are indeed Kayerts and Carlier, representatives of the civilising mission in the African setting of the narrative, rather than Makola, the "Sierra Leone nigger" who works as their clerk. The European pair exhibit a crippling ignorance and a lack of originality or critical assessment and thus become puppets of the imperial apparatus and also of Makola, who demonstrates an astuteness for imperial and capitalist industry. Besides, it is worth noting that in this text, which precedes *Heart of Darkness*, the African characters, including Gobila (the chief of the villages close to the trading post) and Makola, are accorded the quality of speech, the ability to engage in deep thought, and a sense of appropriate conduct over the European agents. In effect, they are generally depicted in more positive terms than the two white men who are described as "incapable of independent thought" in their joint "fellowship" of "stupidity and laziness" (86). Left by themselves over a long period of eight months and absorbed by their individual whims, they end up delirious, resulting in Kayerts unintentionally shooting and killing Carlier, and then later hanging himself.

Given that much of Conrad's writing depicts the dire fate of the individual manipulated by an oppressive and de-individualising system, it is apposite to categorise his works as a collective indictment of imperialism as it provides a contrapuntal appraisal to the discourse of empire. Based on this premise, my overall argument in this study is that it is through his concern with identity, and through the Othering of his characters that Conrad interrogates the extremes of Western hegemony as it comes into contact with (other) peoples and cultures. In setting up his characters in counterpoint to such hegemony, and in deploying them as the subtle tool for a deconstructive examination of imperialism, Conrad's writing, far from actively reinforcing racist ideologies, may, in fact, be perceived as an ideological criticism of the very imperialist discourse that engenders racism. From this perspective, my study of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes* posits that a careful analysis of Conrad's writing reveals that he develops a formulaic

pattern of Othering which he deploys, to a lesser or greater degree, through all his texts. In effect, I demonstrate that this formulaic pattern of Othering works against racist stereotyping as it reveals that Conrad represents all his Others in, basically, the same manner, be they of African, Western, Eastern, or any other ethnic origin.

CONRAD'S OTHERING

For my analysis of Conrad's Others, I draw on critical debates by scholars such as Said and Mudimbe who discuss racial stereotyping as represented in the use of binary terms such as "us" and "them". I further draw on scholars such as Homi Bhabha, whose re-reading of Said results in the introduction of the notions of fetishism and ambivalence into postcolonial theoretical discourse. These notions are important to my discussion as they underpin much of Conrad's representational practice. Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Bhabha explains that stereotyping results in the construction of an identity that is caught between mastery and pleasure, and anxiety and defence as it at once recognises difference and simultaneously disavows it (75). In this construct of the stereotype, that follows after a fetishist logic, is implied an ambivalence that casts the subject in a position of in-betweenness of identity – of being and becoming. Thus, if Conrad does appear to, sometimes, promote racial and cultural differences, it may be argued that the portrayal of his characters harbours the kind of ambivalence described by Bhabha, thus undermining any notion that the author holds a strong conviction in the pure existence of such differences. While my study may indicate certain assumptions of what ideological notions are created in Conrad's works, my main aim will be to move beyond that in order to show how the portrayal of Otherness in his texts conforms to or departs from the production of a stereotyped Other. To make my argument, I conduct a close reading of the selected Conradian texts towards two purposes. First of all, from my close reading of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*, I will elicit the instances of complexity, the indications of ambiguity, the ambivalences, and ironies associated with Conrad's depictions of Othering. Secondly, I will use the insights of those close readings to challenge the existing scholarship on Conrad's representations. I also seek to make a contribution to more general discussions of Otherness, (post)colonialism, and Conrad, inquiring how his works fit into the larger context of pro-

colonial/imperial literary writing or what it means for the reading of modern and postcolonial literature.

As a major part of my analysis, I explore the connections between othering discourses and constructs and intra-colonial relations and encounters. This exploration focuses on encounters and relations such as those between James Wait and Donkin or between Wait and the ship and its crew in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*; the relations between Marlow and Jim, as well as Jim's encounter with other characters and places in *Lord Jim*; and the encounters between Razumov and the revolutionaries in *Under Western Eyes*. In recent times, debates in postcolonial studies have started to gradually focus on such intra-colonial connections and their implications for the overall significance of the text.

Examples of such efforts are present in works like Elleke Boehmer's *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial, 1890-1920* (2002) which examines the inter-relationship between different anti-colonial agents within different colonial sites and explores how the mutual influences and interdiscursivity of these agents may have affected, in any significant way, the political and even cultural postcolonial re-shaping of these colonial regions. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds' book *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (2008) also makes a strong case for this kind of research. A more recent example of such new trends in postcolonial studies is Drabinski's book, *Levinas and the Postcolonial: Race, Nation and Other* (2011), which explores how the language of Otherness changes with trans-national and trans-cultural contact through a comparative re-reading of Levinas' works alongside parallel theories of alterity. Although my research is, in some ways, similar to this latter, it differs from it in that I reflect on the specificity of the different (European, African, colonial) Others represented in Conrad's works, examining how the representation of these Others may differ with respect to the geographical setting including the perceived political and economic standing, social context and, possibly, historical background of his narratives.

Reading Conrad, one is struck, not by his Othering of African subjects (which is well-known), but by the crucial roles that racial, gendered, and classed Others of various kinds play in his work. Thus, for my analysis, I have selected three of Conrad's texts. These are *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Under Western Eyes* and *Lord Jim*. My selection is informed by the observation

that the major characters in these texts are described in terms that allow them to be readily identified as Others. Informed by the depictions of Africans in *Heart of Darkness* and drawing on these descriptions as my point of departure, I delineate various techniques that Conrad uses to Other his characters. In my assessment, I certainly find that Conrad's depiction of the African Other differs significantly from his depiction of the European Other in that he focuses more on the skin colour of the African and links this to varying notions of blackness and gloom. This fact notwithstanding, I posit that, to a large extent, Conrad's underlying technique of Othering is fundamentally the same as, in all instances, he 'strips away' the humanity of his subjects in order to Other them.

In this study, I demonstrate that a typology of Othering in Conrad needs to distinguish between at least four distinct techniques of Othering. These techniques include the use of denigrating or demeaning terms, the use of animal metaphors, the use of adjectives of contrast, and disembodiment. Generally, these techniques of Othering ultimately culminate in the gradual dehumanisation of the characters thereby depicting them as Others who even lose their humanity as they go through the process of Othering.

The first technique is that of using demeaning or denigrating terms to describe his characters. Instances of this can be found in *Heart of Darkness* where Conrad projects Africans in demeaning terms. He refers to them as "a camp of natives" (3) or "criminals" (3) to whom the outraged law had come; or he describes them as rebellious "savages" or "niggers" whose heads had been chopped off to adorn the stakes around Kurtz's compound (71). In this technique of denigration, the Othered characters are depicted as so low that they are dispensable. Their demeaned status seems to justify the treatment they get: they face the 'outraged law', or they are killed unceremoniously and even in their death their corpses can be further desecrated.

The second technique Conrad employs is the use of animal metaphors through which he animalises his Others. This technique represents a further step in the debasement of the Othered character who is in this instance compared to an animal and so treated also like one. In an example of this technique, Conrad extends on the description of the Africans as savages and depicts them as bearing "black rags [that] were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails" (9). He also identifies the fireman on the boat as "an improved specimen" who

looks like "a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on its hind legs" (45). The irony of this last description is that even though the character is referred to as an 'improvement' over his kind, he is not spared the animalistic descriptions. While these descriptions of the Africans in Conrad's text may appear outrageously racist, they differ only in degree from his description of Peter Willems, who is cast as an European Other in *An Outcast of the Islands*. In the same manner of stripping away the character's humanity, Conrad depicts Willems as "not particularly interesting in himself," bearing a "dependent [dis]position, [and the] strange, dubious status of a mistrusted, disliked, worn-out European" (282). In addition to his dubious nature, his gaunt physical appearance makes him all the more suspicious as he is presented as having "hollow […] cheeks, a heavy grey moustache and eyes without any expression whatever" (282). As the reader's attention is drawn to his "lean neck wholly uncovered" and his "bare feet in a pair of straw slippers" (282), the indication that parts of his body are bare and uncovered evokes the mental image of an act of stripping away or denuding which anticipates the animalising descriptions that dehumanise him. These animalising references are then presented in the description of his aimless loitering: "he wandered silently amongst the houses in daylight, almost as dumb as an animal and apparently much more homeless" (282). This suggestion of aimlessness, connected to the comparison to an animal, casts Willems in the light of a stray and homeless animal wandering about in the open. Reinforcing this comparison of Willems to an aimless and even stray animal, Conrad adds that at night he "must have had a place, a hut, a palm-leaf shed, some sort of hovel" (282) to retire to. He concludes this animalistic description with the suggestion that "an air of futile mystery hung over him, something not exactly dark but obviously ugly" (282). This suggestion that he had an air of 'futile mystery' evokes also the notion of a vain or wasted existence, a life without purpose, that makes the character despicable,

The third technique of Othering that I identify in Conrad's writing is the use of adjectives of contrast to define his characters. Often, through this method, the character is cast in gloom (connoting negativity or darkness) as opposed to light (which bears a positive connotation and alludes to the notion of enlightenment). An extension of these contrasts will also evoke the ability to 'see' or to discern things better as opposed to an obtuseness often resulting in destruction. In Conrad's use of this technique, the mere contrast of colours such as "black" versus "white" or the indication of darker shades as opposed to lighter ones would often allude to a racial or social differentiation of the character, producing the Othering effect of subordination. I draw an example

of this from *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, where James Wait, referred to as the "nigger" on the ship is captured in a contrast which plays on the colour of his skin, extending the suggestion of blackness to the atmosphere of the narrative:

> In the **blackness** of the doorway a pair of eyes glimmered **white** […] Then James Wait's head protruding, became visible, as if suspended between the two hands that grasped a doorpost on each side of the face. […] **He seemed to hasten the retreat of departing light by his very presence; the setting sun dipped sharply, as though fleeing before our nigger; a black mist emanated from him** (45, emphasis mine).

This description of Wait employs the use of contrast to draw attention to his skin colour. Besides, the added suggestion of the morbid effect that his presence appears to have on nature combine to depict the character as the dreaded Other who is at once feared and yet desired as his presence assures the self of its supremacy. Established as the ultimate Other on the ship, Wait is portrayed as a corrupting influence on the ship's company who are described as resembling "criminals conscious of misdeeds more than honest men distracted by doubt" (63) and as "a crowd of abject but untrustworthy slaves" (63). In this description, the men, who have been manipulated by Wait to show more allegiance to him than to their masters on the ship, are caught between a sense of guilt and a feeling of doubt as to the appropriateness of their actions. In the ambivalence of their sentiments, their depiction as 'a crowd of abject but untrustworthy slaves' evokes Kristeva's notion of abjection as that which disturbs identity due to its ambiguity or in-betweenness. The suggestion of their untrustworthiness even in their submission hints at the ambivalent or indeterminate nature of their submission. Besides, Conrad's use of 'slaves' here in reference to Wait's shipmates evokes the Hegelian master/ slave dialectic in which the relationship of bondage and lordship that develops between two conscious beings results in a struggle to the death. Through Conrad's use of contrast, he sets Wait up as the embodiment of darkness and negativity that obscures truth and morality from both himself and his shipmates. The only way the rest of the men are able to emerge from this dark influence is upon Wait's death.

The fourth technique of Othering that I identify in Conrad's writing is that of disembodiment which normally takes the form of the subject being described in spectral terms. I

refer to this as 'Othering through spectrality.' This method is extensively used in *Lord Jim* where the eponymous character, Jim, is often compared to a ghost or a disembodied soul: "He had passed [the] days on the verandah, buried in a long chair, […] irresolute and silent, **like a ghost without a home to haunt**" (51, emphasis mine). Such spectral references to Jim gradually increase throughout the narrative, creating the effect that he becomes mystified by the end of the narrative.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In my analysis of *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*, I examine how Conrad's (narrative or linguistic) process of Othering stylistically deploys four techniques to explore the subjectivity of his characters. I also try to work out how his process of Othering may change from one type of Other to another type of Other. Since it is not my aim to simply catalogue imagery and diction to sustain the traditional argument of Conrad's racism, I avoid the much-analysed work *Heart of Darkness* and only allude to it for purposes of reference when necessary. Besides, since the Othering of Africa/ns in that work has been much debated, I feel the need to circumvent it in favour of other works of Conrad which will constitute, in some ways, a more representative idea of his style of Othering in his writing.

My selection of the three texts that I focus on for my study is informed more by an inquisitive urge to discover how the Other is generally represented in Conrad's writing, rather than by the need to prove any ideological bias on his part. Thus, my analyses of racial representations are incidental to my study, resulting only as a consequence of my reading and critical analysis of texts that mostly do not revolve around racial others. I take the view that it would be perverse for such a great writer as Conrad to simply depict difference and, thereby, create notions of alterity in his writing for the mere gratification of the imperial sensitivities of his Victorian public. Consequently, I assert that being himself positioned in the conflux of an indeterminate identity, Conrad's writing represented a personal effort to make sense of his own subjectivity within the diverse social and political frameworks of his varied spatial existence. Living as a Polish exile in England, writing in his adopted and self-taught English language, taking on a career in writing, bearing his previous experience as a seaman who fluently spoke French, having lived under Russian occupation in his very early days, Conrad himself carried with him both socially and

psychologically an endless string of identities which contributed to his self-construction. This concern with the individual's construction of self in different circumstances strongly undergirds his writing. It is this focus that I bring to my analysis as I examine how Conrad demonstrates that his characters, influenced by their social and political perspectives, contribute to their own subjectivity through their actions and choices.

My study is structured into five parts made up of three analytical chapters framed by the introduction and the conclusion. For each of my analytical chapters, I focus on a single novel in order to conduct as in-depth an examination as possible. For my textual analysis, I start with *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* because the N-word in its title invariably evokes a level of engagement with the racial debate that allows me to tackle, to whatever minor extent, the racial question. I then examine *Lord Jim* to explore how Conrad represents a Western European Other, and then I lastly look at *Under Western Eyes* for its representation of an Eastern European Other.

Chapter One is titled "Signifying Otherness: Race and Colour in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*". In this chapter, I focus on the title text and demonstrate how Conrad signifies Otherness in his characters through the use of race and colour. Drawing heavily on the concept of signifying from the post-structuralist use of the term as well as from its use in African-American discourse, I identify two main characters in the narrative who embody Otherness. These characters are Donkin, who is captured as a dirty European tainted in his whiteness by his association to filth, and James Wait represented as an eloquent, well-dressed and evidently refined 'black man' whose sophisticated appearance is, however, undermined by his dubious nature. In a narrative that is many ways reminiscent of T. S. Coleridge's ballad, "the Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the tropes of goodwill, good fortune and camaraderie are used to throw more light on the representation of alterity in the two Othered characters. Further evoking the old mariner's tale, the mood of the ship at the beginning of the narrative is essentially a happy and buoyant one. However, this mood takes on a morbid aspect with the appearance of James Wait, upon whom lies the commission of sin that purportedly tosses the microcosmic universe of the *Narcissus* into a series of upheavals which set the stage for an assessment of the fortitude of men in the face of turbulent circumstances.

Chapter Two focuses on *Lord Jim* under the title "Si(gh)ting the Other: Space and Time in *Lord Jim*". Here, I develop the concept of thirdsight as a mode of identifying the protagonist, Jim,

as Othered through different levels of perception. My development of this concept constitutes the other major contribution of my research. Drawing extensively on the notions of third space from Edward Soja's spatial dialectics and Homi Bhabha's discourse on cultural liminality, I explore how, through thirdsight, the reader may transgress the limits of narrativity and reach beyond Marlow's surface narrative to discern Jim's Otherness through a transpositional, juxtapositional and contrapuntal reading of the text. To achieve this, I propose a reading of the text that brings together different levels of observation – Marlow's, the reader's and that of third parties; and an interpretation of the knowledge (of Jim and of other characters) formed through such a reading through perceptions on multiple levels. In effect, my analysis concludes that Jim's representation as "an anguished and divided anti-hero" (John Batchelor 109), results from the fact that the subject, in a constant state of self-construction, is never completely formed as it evolves, through ideas of itself, from one permutation of identity to another.

In Chapter Three titled "Contesting Otherness: *Under Western Eyes*", I focus on Razumov, the protagonist of the title text, as the Other. My choice of this text is informed by an interest to view how Conrad represents an European Other located primarily within the cultural boundaries of an European territory polarised as Eastern and, therefore, different from Western Europe. In my examination of this text, I explore how Conrad's use of the trope of doubling indicates an attempt by the character to elude and resist his identification as an Other. Besides, I demonstrate how the presentation of the character's split ideological perspective reveals a collision between a social identity and a national identity, resulting in an in-betweenness that sabotages his resistance efforts. In the end, his confession aligns him with the revolutionary ideas that he has originally claimed to resent and his final condition of being neither dead and silenced nor actively alive and functional casts him in a permanent state of Otherness from which he can no longer escape.

My conclusion is titled "The Other, the Alien, The Exiled". In this chapter, I link the three texts analysed in my research to demonstrate how the motif of Othering extends beyond the trope of difference to encompass alienation and exile. Starting from an assessment of Conrad's personal life as a major influence on his writing, I posit that these works, representative in some way of the writer's oeuvre, provide a viable point of departure for an analysis of his abiding occupation with questions of imperialist/ power discourses, interpersonal and intercultural contact, and the construction of identity in relation to the self and the Other.

CHAPTER ONE

SIGNIFYING OTHERNESS:

RACE AND COLOUR IN *THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS*

> On men reprieved by its disdainful mercy, the immortal sea confers in its justice the full privilege of desired unrest. Through the perfect wisdom of its grace they are not permitted to meditate at ease upon the complicated and acrid savour of existence. They must without pause justify their life to the eternal pity that commands toil to be hard and unceasing…; till the weary succession of nights and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is redeemed at last by the vast silence of pain and labour, by the dumb fear and dumb courage of men obscure, forgetful and enduring. (*The Nigger of the Narcissus* 55).

This chapter focuses on *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and examines how Conrad's novella discloses a representation of Otherness of its main character through a process of signifying. Set upon the oceans of the South Pacific, the novella reflects the writer's abiding concern to explore the motivations of men and to examine what drives the passions of the majority of humanity. In embarking on such a probe so as to make others 'see' what he believes to have discovered about the very soul of mankind, the writer casts his characters upon the backdrop of a portentously capricious universe solely made up of sea and sky. It is the effect of this capriciousness upon human nature that is captured in the epigraph to this chapter. In Conrad's portrayal of the sea as merciless and capricious, he also stages it as the exacting universe of 'toil', 'pain' and 'labour' in which men must 'justify their life'. It is in the vastness of this universe that Conrad depicts the *Narcissus* as "a fragment detached from the earth" sailing on "lonely and swift like a small planet" (18). To complete the planet imagery that he ascribes to the ship, he further states:

> Round her the abysses of sky and sea met in an unattainable frontier. A great circular solitude moved with her, ever changing and ever the same, always monotonous and always imposing. Now and then another wandering white speck, burdened with life, appeared far-off—disappeared; intent on its own destiny. The sun looked upon her all day, and every morning rose with a burning, round stare… (*Narcissus* 18).

In this description, Conrad draws the sky and the sea together into a globular unity that depicts a microcosmic earth. He further neatly circumscribes this microcosm by defining its orbit implied by the 'great circular solitude [that] moved with her'. To additionally consolidate this imagery, he alludes to other distant ships as though they were other planets within the galaxy of his created universe; and he also locates the essential presence of the sun over this miniature earth. On this 'small planet', Conrad marks life as 'ever changing and ever the same, always monotonous and always imposing'. In line with these contradictory ideas, Conrad further portrays that his fictional universe is anything but homogenous; for it depicts an admixture of natures and cultures, a characteristic which is typical of most of his stories. Having established this image of a miniature earth fraught with its own inconsistencies, Conrad prepares the reader's mind to already imagine the ship crew as representative of humanity with all its variety and in all its forms. Thus, in the cosmological setting of the *Narcissus*, Conrad's heterogeneous humanity constitutes a variety of men of Finnish, Dutch, English, Irish, Scottish, Norwegian, and West Indian backgrounds. It is from this motley crowd that the author marks his central character whom he inadvertently represents in ways that depict him as an Other.

In his fondness for the use of the adventure narrative, Conrad creates an interstitial space between sky and sea – a space far removed from the presumed stability of land – which offers a good opportunity for the creation of diverse identities through the fertile imagination of the writer. Drawing on his own seafaring experiences of being tossed into a world of alterities and uncertainties far from the metropolitan centre of imperial certitude and homogenisation, Conrad's fictional universe depicts a volatility that harbours an inclination to devastation. It is in this hostile setting, fraught with such stark heterogeneity that threatens the fragile stability of a universe which is already all astir, that we are presented with characters representing a diverse humanity, including the worst possible elements of humankind. Among this representative group are characters such

as the resolute and indefatigable Captain Allistoun, the sage and calm Singleton, the cocky and cowardly Donkin and the eponymous "nigger" of Conrad's title, James Wait. Although my main discussion focuses on how the narrative exposes James Wait as the ultimate Other identifiable in the text through signification, I will also demonstrate that Donkin, positioned as an Other of a lesser order, underscores Wait's Othering by his own enabling signifying schemes.

Through the narrative of this novella, Conrad describes the arduous homeward journey of the ship Narcissus from India round The Cape in the Southern Seas in winter. Being the author's third piece of writing and his first major experiment with what Dan Lui has termed "methods of descriptive rendering" (2), the story also captures and explores the characters' troubled inter-personal relationships, as well as their internal struggles with compulsion, obsession and neurosis. According to Edward Said, Conrad's characters are threatened "with darkness, disorder, and formlessness" (112) – a situation that "leads to an anarchic enlargement of the self" (113). In Said's analysis, Conrad's attempts to deal with this nervous condition reflects the author's personal struggle with "the egoistic assertion of [his] existence so that others will feel it" (112). It is perhaps from this foreboding sense of a restive soul aiming at forging a more unified and recognised self that Conrad develops what Haripersad Sewlall refers to as an "obsession with otherness" (29). A scrutiny of such an 'obsession' makes it possible to catalogue imagery and diction related to a racialized regime of alterity in Conrad's work. As Sewlall further notes, "it would be a relatively simple matter to find evidence of Conrad's 'racism' as alleged by Chinua Achebe in his famous, if not notorious utterances [about] Conrad as a "thoroughgoing racist" (Achebe 1988[1977], 257) [or as a] "bloody racist" (Achebe 1990[1978], 124)" (Sewlall 29). However, the argument in this chapter upholds the notion that such a reductionist assessment of Conrad and his works "routinely ignore and minimize the complexities of Conrad's experience and how those (at times outright contradictory) complexities are negotiated in his work" (Ross 4). My argument is furthermore underpinned by Sewlall's assertion that "[v]iewed from the theoretical space afforded by postcoloniality, [the] constructions of the other in Conrad's [works] are not as clear-cut and unproblematized as [critics such as Achebe] might suggest" (30). He further points out that in actual fact, the writer is rather "ironic" and "most certainly ambiguous and even subversive" in his overall portrayal of subjectivity through his treatment of Otherness (30). Thus, the debate about whether Conrad is racist or not remains unresolved, probably because it is unresolvable depending

on the critical angle from which it may be approached. For, in whichever way it is analysed, this argument about racism is bound to provoke intricate and rather biased opinions that distract from a comprehensive analysis of the author's masterful literary style.

Since the notion of signifying the Other is central to my discussion of Conrad's mode of representation in the *Narcissus*, I will examine what the term means and how it functions. For this examination, I draw heavily on Stuart Hall's (1997) extensive discussion of the subject in his work, *Representation*. I defer to Hall's analysis because he summarises the major theories of representation from its early structuralist conceptions through to its contemporary applications. In my analysis of this narrative, I use the notion of signifying in two ways. First, I draw on the linguistic notion of signification which is predicated on the existence of the sign consisting of two inseparable aspects: the signifier (the material form of the sign, e.g., sounds in the air, letters on a page that refer to the sign) and the signified (the concept evoked by these words which gives meaning to the sign) (Hall 16-17). This idea of signification, which extends to the larger field of semiotics in its application, is mostly associated with the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, although it also derives from the earlier, but much lesser known philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (Abrams & Harpham 356-357). In my use of the concept of signification from this angle, I combine Saussure's predominantly linguistic, or verbal, analysis with Peirce's symbolic, iconic and indexical perspective of the concept. Secondly, I also use the concept of signification as it has been explored in Henry Louis Gates, Jr's *The Signifying Monkey*. According to Gates' analysis, the concept of signifyin(g) "is a trope that subsumes other rhetorical tropes, including metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony (the 'master' tropes), and also hyperbole, litotes, and metalepsis" (686). In the sense in which Gates uses it, the term is employed to describe a variety of African-American verbal rituals, including "'trop[ing]-a-dope,'[…] 'marking,' 'loud-talking,' 'specifying,' 'testifying,' 'calling out' (of one's name), 'sounding,' 'rapping,' and 'playing the dozens'" (687). Through a critical assessment of texts within the African-American tradition, Gates examines how this concept is manifested; and drawing on Ralph Ellison, he points out that within their specific cultural context the rhetorical negotiations of signifyin(g) enable "complicated assertions and denials of identity" (117) and even of universal belonging (175). For my analysis of Conrad's narrative, the first meaning of the concept of signifying, from its use in linguistics, enables an examination of the text from the author's stylistic and figurative use of signs and

symbols which combine to create certain impressions on the reader, thus conveying meaning from the text through these impressions. The second meaning of the concept, deeply rooted in African and African-American culture and history, extends the stylistic implications of signification in the narrative so that it does not only facilitate an understanding of the text, but it also marks the text as indicative of much more than can be implied through a random selection of the signs and symbols that combine to create meaning. The 'more' that I focus on in this examination of the novella is the indication of Otherness that is underscored in the presentation of its main character through the combination of these two meanings of signification.

Right from the very title of the novella, these notions of signification are subtly implied. The term 'Narcissus', which, in the narrative, refers to the name of the ship, evokes the mythological connotations associated with that name. In Greek mythology, Narcissus, the son of the river god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope, is a hunter who is noted for his extreme beauty. This makes him arrogant and scornful towards all who love him. Lured by the goddess Nemesis to a pool, he sees his reflection in the water and falls in love with his own image. Having become obsessed with this image of himself, he loses his will to live and dies as a result. In its evocation of this mythology and its allusion to the sin of self-love, along with its self-deluding and fatal consequences, the ship Narcissus can be read, in Saussurean terms, as a sign which, drawing on all its connotative references, already imposes a certain ineluctable meaning on the text. Besides, taken from Peirce's perspective, the name of the ship serves as an index foretokening the eventual demise of the character associated with its inferences. Lastly, from the African-American notion of signifyin(g), the ship is ingeniously disguised in Conrad's narrative as a quasi-character that, again through its classical connotations, signifies upon its crew, especially upon the main character around whom the narrative evolves. Thus, even though the narrative is centred around this main character, James Wait, every sign, including even the most camouflaged allusions, provides information that contributes to the overall significance of the text. In a preface addressed to his 'Readers in America', Conrad, in reference to James Wait, states that "in the book he is nothing; he is merely the centre of the ship's collective psychology and the pivot of the action" (*Narcissus* 168). From this reference to his main character, it is obvious that Conrad uses his protagonist, Wait, in two main ways. On one hand, he embodies the 'collective' consciousness of the ship, and on the other hand, he represents the conflict that drives the plot. In being depicted in these ways, Wait signifies both in the semiotic sense of the word and in the sense in which it is used in African-

American discourse. Symbolised as the Devil (11; 71) who epitomises all things evil, it is no wonder that he should signify the consciousness of the ship manned by a crew who are described variously as "a wicked lot, […] about as wicked as any ship's company in this sinful world!" (49), and as "[w]orse than devils too sometimes—downright, horned devils" (77). Besides, in being characterised as representing evil and as embodying the conflict that moves the plot, Wait is shown to portray a feature that characterises the concept of signifyin(g) as it pertains to Gates' analysis of the Signifying Monkey. This is evidenced in the fact that like Gates' Signifying Monkey, Wait is presented "not primarily as a character in the narrative but rather as a vehicle for narration itself" (Gates 688). In this function, he signifies, as the term is implied in African-American discourse, by the fact that he "wreaks havoc upon 'the signified'" (Gates 689). Looking, therefore, at the extent to which the narrative depends so heavily on James Wait's characterisation, it may then be argued that Conrad, in the actual manoeuvring of his narrative style, contradicts himself in the fact that in his book, James Wait is far from being 'nothing' and his presence and significance is in no way 'merely' arbitrary. For without him and all the signification that his person cumulatively suggests, Conrad's novella and all the meaning it holds would probably never have existed. As I further examine the text, I will demonstrate how Wait's characterisation inadvertently signifies Otherness in ways that bind the narrative together.

Although Wait is depicted as the principal Other in this narrative, my discussion will reveal that he is enabled by a minor Other in the character of Donkin, as I have earlier mentioned. To explore the ways in which these two characters, that I identify as Othered in the *Narcissus*, are depicted, I indicate that, while reading the text, it is possible to distinguish between the 'proper' characters, who have certain standard qualities attributed to them by the author, and the 'improper' characters, who are markedly different and represented as 'Other' to the norm. As I identify these Others in the *Narcissus*, it is important to point out that while the ways in which their difference is represented can indeed be problematic, difference, in itself, is not negative. In fact, in accordance with all identity politics premised on such an affirmative take on difference, I posit that it is arguably necessary and important to the establishment of meaning. Drawing on de Saussure (1960), Stuart Hall (1997) points out that there is nothing wrong with indicating difference, as this is "essential to meaning; without it meaning could not exist" (224). Reading Conrad through this notion of indicating difference, I point out that in his characteristic effort to establish meaning on a broad existentialist level, Conrad, through his writing, uses methods of differentiation to examine

ways in which individuals are connected to and relate to each other in a "latent feeling of fellowship with all creation" (*Narcissus* 145). This inconspicuous 'fellowship' creates a "subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits [and]… binds men to each other," thus binding them together with "all humanity" (146). From this conviction of a universal bond, it is little wonder then that Conrad unites in his representation of Otherness, the two characters, Donkin and James Wait, who would have ordinarily been set against each other within an imperialist discourse of binary structures. In such a unified depiction of Otherness which combines the European (Donkin) and the West Indian (Wait) subjects, Conrad challenges and subverts the conventional binaries of superior versus inferior subjectivities that predicate a distinction between that which is considered the norm or the standard and its deviation or Other. However, inadvertent, perhaps, as such a subversive effort of characterisation might be, Conrad's style of representation hardly escapes the binary descriptions of the imperial master narrative associated with his time. This observation is based on the fact that, while the two characters, together and yet still separately, embody representations of Otherness in the narrative, their depiction as Others is primarily cast through contrasting terms of binary oppositions which refer specifically to their colour and race.

To begin with, both characters are first introduced into the narrative by being signified as different through colour. Donkin is described as "a man with shifty eyes and a yellow hatchet face" (*Narcissus* 29), and James Wait is captured simply as the "Nigger" (*Narcissus* 34), a term loaded with ambivalent racial, political, and social connotations. With regard to Donkin, the description of him as having 'shifty eyes' already suggests that he cannot be trusted as it implies that he is a dishonest person who avoids direct eye contact with others. Moreover, the description of him as having a 'yellow hatchet face' compounds his characterisation as untrustworthy through the added implications drawn from this description. First of all, the colour yellow evokes the notion of cowardice and fear, and also of sickness (such as hepatitis or jaundice), while the word hatchet connotes a small axe, a tool employed for chopping things, often through violent and destructive action. Related to the imagery of the tool, the 'hatchet' also evokes the notion of a 'hatchet man' who is employed to carry out unpleasant tasks on others or who constantly carries out vilifying attacks on others. Following from these ideas, it is little wonder that Donkin, who is as much a scoundrel as Wait, is used to expose the latter for his pretences and, in the end, to mercilessly snuff out the life from him as he verbally abuses him and shamelessly steals his money while Wait lies helplessly ill in his bunk, unable to defend himself. In effect, considered from Peirce's semiotic

approach, the hatchet metaphor serves as an index to Donkin's disagreeable character and the ruthless role that he plays in Wait's death which is already foreshadowed through his physical description. Wait, whose first appearance is heavily impacted by the pun on his last name 'Wait', (which I will discuss later) is referred to in that initial appearance, and several times afterwards, as 'Nigger'. Being a term that is historically loaded with political and cultural racial and pejorative connotations (Fanon, *Black Skins*, 165), the N-word used in reference to Wait in Conrad's narrative evokes all the historical implications that it alludes to. Among the meanings associated with the word are slavery, inferiority, dehumanisation, and animalisation (Fanon, *Wretched*, 7). Thus, even though the character is portrayed as bearing certain traits that attempt to subvert the obnoxious inferences of the term "nigger", its persistent use in reference to him forces its essence upon him. Consequently, he is gradually Othered as the narrative unfolds to the point of assuming a monstrosity that dehumanises him. In this respect, it may be argued that this first reference to Wait as a 'nigger' right at the onset of the narrative also foreshadows his Otherness which develops through the plot.

In relation to the foregoing about the relevance of these initial descriptions of Donkin and James Wait, I agree with Stuart Hall's assertion that once an image is created, it "carries many meanings" (219). To quote him at length, Hall points out that:

> [The] image both shows an event (denotation) and carries a 'message' or meaning (connotation) […] about 'race', colour and 'otherness'. We can't help reading images of this kind as 'saying something', not just about the people or the occasion, but about their 'otherness', their 'difference'. '*Difference' has been marked*. How it is then interpreted is a constant and recurring preoccupation in the representation of people who are racially and ethnically different from the majority population. Difference signifies. It 'speaks'. (219)

In this assertion, Hall points out that once an image is evoked, it signifies by drawing attention to itself and registering an impression, a presence (an event). Besides, it also triggers a range of meanings, implied by any inferences that may be associated with it. Thus, the image makes meaning by being 'marked', set apart or differentiated from other images. In this way, it signifies or 'speaks'. It is from such a perspective about how differentiating images signify, or 'speak', that I posit that the images created by the introductory descriptions of the afore-mentioned characters

enable the construction of the characters' Otherness. In other words, Conrad, through his stylistic mode of representation, marks difference upon these two characters with the images that are evoked by the description of their features. From a Saussurean point of view, I argue that, functioning as signs, these images carry meanings of inferiority and even of negativity that reveal the Otherness of the characters. Additionally, from Peirce's indexical perspective, I proffer that these images that are used to describe the characters also anticipate events that are to occur later in the plot which validate the identification of these characters as Others. In effect, they serve as pointers to, or signals of their Otherness.

Besides, in what has been described as his propensity for detailed 'visual presentations" (Watt 94), Conrad does not only present the event or the exhibit but he also fully expands its message with all the plausible connotations he would like the reader to attach to it. Of course, this in no way limits the reader's range of connotative allusion; rather, from a post-structuralist perspective, it expands it even further as meaning is not fixed and is constantly in a flux. No doubt, the writer fully intends this; and right from his title, in connecting the referent term for Wait – 'nigger' – to the ship – Narcissus, with all the historical and classical symbolism that these terms evoke, Conrad inadvertently constructs a sort of doubly crossed symbolism in which each term – nigger and Narcissus – signifies in its own way, even while they simultaneously signify upon each other. To expand on the relation between the two Ns – to wit the racial epithet and the Greek mythological figure – I postulate, from the African-American notion of signifyin(g), that by yoking the two terms, the writer achieves "a rhetorical indirection" which is "'almost purely stylistic'" (Gates 693). Exploring this rhetorical style of indirection from Claudia Mitchell-Kernan's perspective, Gates indicates that this is the "key aspect of signifying" as it directly implies meaning through "'its indirect intent or metaphorical reference'" (Gates 693). In effect, signifyin(g) entails "direction through indirection" (Gates 689), the implication of meaning through the use of rhetorical elements such as "figuration, troping, and parody […] or pastiche" (Gates 693). From this perspective, Conrad's text may be, arguably, read as a pastiche of the Greek mythology in which Wait assumes the character, (and the fate), of the mythological figure. Used in this way, Wait signifies through the trope of blackness and its associated connotations of evil and death as he projects (read reflects) onto the ship the plethora of meanings that his persona implies. Conversely, the Narcissus animated by its crew casts (read reflects back) upon Wait its shortcomings, of which it divests itself by achieving through Wait's eventual death its own moral

cleansing. Referred to in various instances as a "black fraud" (25), a "bloody black beast (42), and a "black phantom" (93), Wait, in his blackness, progresses through the narrative in the sequence of these metaphors that are used to describe him. He thus transforms from a fraud, is captured in the monstrosity of a beast, and finally lends closure to the narrative as a phantom by implication of his death. These metaphorical representations signify the negative notions implied by his race, which include the dark history of slavery and the enduring politics of racial inferiority. In effect, while Wait signifies racially and historically as an individual, he also signifies upon the ship (troubled and mostly described in sombre terms due to being caught in horrible storms), and upon its crew, often described as a "dark group" of men (9; 74; 107). In a similar vein, the ship, with its classical allusions, draws attention to the significance of narcissistic tendencies while it also signifies upon Wait through whom these tendencies are staged. In an obvious pun on his name, the character then becomes the weight (or burden) that persistently draws the ship into storms and towards near damnation until he is cast off (in his death), resulting in the redemption of the ship and its men. With regard to the foregoing, I suggest that in his stylistic manipulations of and connections between Wait and the Narcissus, Conrad subconsciously achieves the effect of demonstrating a subtle wordplay on the notions of racism and narcissism in which the two terms signify upon each other. This may be perceived in the extent to which narcissism may be deemed as racist in that it prioritises the standardisation and preservation of a certain notion of the Self to the exclusion of Others, while racism may equally be deemed narcissistic in its egocentric differentiation of Others through an over-inflated sense of Self-worth.

Through his sustained stylistic technique of visual depiction, Conrad describes Wait by focusing on his colour – he is different because he is dark-skinned, a "nigger." In what Fanon refers to as the racial epidermal schema (2008, 84), the "nigger," Wait, is defined throughout by the fact of his blackness. Associated with this fact of his physical appearance are many more attributive connotations, which are distributed across the entire narrative. However, before we even enter the text and encounter the ways in which Wait's blackness signifies in the narrative, Conrad already indicates what our "nigger" should, first and foremost, signify among other significations that will undoubtedly follow. In a preface that he writes to his "Readers in America", Conrad states:

> A negro in a British forecastle is a lonely being. He has no chums. Yet James Wait, afraid of death and making her his accomplice was an impostor of some character—mastering our compassion, scornful of our sentimentalism, triumphing over our suspicions. (*Narcissus* 168).

From Conrad's declaration, the reader is already prompted to consider Wait as a loner who 'has no chums'. He further states that Wait, fearful of death and yet making it his 'accomplice', simultaneously appeals to and scorns our sympathy. On the one hand, the indication of his loneliness alludes to him being an outsider of some sort in the sense that he derives no sense of belonging from among the crew members on the ship; and this arouses our sympathy for him. On the other hand, however, his association with death and, as we later discover, the way he capitalises on this ominous association to sabotage the courage and faith of his fellow shipmates, estranges him even more. Ultimately, his mockery of the shipmates' sympathy for him, and the readers empathy, due to the fact of his malingering at the beginning of the narrative, culminates in a disaffection towards him even after his pretence actually gives way to true indisposition and to imminent death. Through this rendering of the character of James Wait, Conrad at once plays on our sentiments while he uses the character himself to overturn any sentimentalism that we may have developed towards him at the onset of the narrative. Countless theorists of sentimentalism, such as Jane Tompkins and Joanne Dobson, have argued that one of the main aims of sentimental literature is to make readers empathise with the suffering of others. A classic example of this occurs in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe which depicts the suffering of slaves in nineteenth century America. In this novel, the readers' sentiments for the black slaves are sustained, and even intensified, as the narrative unfolds. In her book *Sensational Designs*, Jane Tompkins argues for the inclusion in the canon of Stowe's novel, (which has often been excluded because it is sentimental and also because it is considered racist) (140). Tompkins' claim is made on the evidence that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in causing its readers to empathise with the plight of its enslaved characters, was "spectacularly persuasive" in its ability to "convince a [whole] nation to go to war and to free its slaves" (141). Thus, in its sentimental quality, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* arouses a sense of fellow-feeling in the reader, a sentiment which is also depicted in the narrative itself through characters such as George Shelby, the son of Tom's first master and upon whom Tom has had a great and positive influence; and Eva, the daughter of Tom's second master and whose close

friendship with Tom is undergirded by their shared religion. In Conrad's *Narcissus*, however, the consequence of Wait's abuse of sentimentalism is that any tendency to fellow-feeling from his shipmates "takes a diabolical turn as the ship's crew, with a mutinous single-mindedness, heap moral responsibility" onto [Wait], dehumanizing him in the process" (Rae Greiner 13-14). Thus, in his demonstration of the detrimental effects of an exaggerated and over-indulgent appeal to sentimentalism, resulting in its abuse, Conrad, through his *Narcissus*, stages a critique of the aesthetics and politics of sentimentalism, especially of its function, as captured in 19th century writing, as a subconscious appeal to what may be deemed as acceptable moral action.

At the very onset of the narrative, Wait's introduction as character is dramatically staged as he literally barges onto the ship. After Mr. Baker, the shipmate, has mustered the men, he observes that he is "one hand short" but is unable to make out on his list the name of that last man, as it is "all a smudge" (10). However, just as he dismisses the men, instructing them to go below, and he also starts to turn away, a "deep, ringing voice" cries out "'Wait!'" (10). Occurring right after the shipmate's instruction for the men to go, this pronouncement clearly causes the men, as well as the shipmate himself, to halt and turn around as it contradicts his instruction. Furious that anyone would dare to contradict him, Mr. Baker asks who called out, and the caller repeats with insistence "'Wait!'" (10). To this, the shipmate retorts: "'Who are you! How dare you…'" (10), only to realise later that the caller, Wait, meant simply to identify himself. This initial confusion that characterises Wait's appearance is significant for the effect that it has on the crew right from the start. The obvious puzzlement resulting from Wait's declaration of his name is symptomatic of the influence that he will continue to exert on the men who, frozen, in this instance, into inaction or, perhaps, delayed action, persistently display a vacillation in duty or allegiance throughout the rest of the narrative. Thus, in a sense, this early attention drawn to the pun on Wait's name shows him up as a device used by the author to create as well as indicate the major conflict in the narrative, which is a conflict of duty, marked by the constant ambivalence personified in the character's name and appearance. Additionally, the framing of Wait's appearance with the shipmate's indication of being 'one hand short' and unable to clearly see the last name on his list because it is 'all a smudge', already foreshadows events that are yet to unfold in the rest of the narrative. First, even though Wait does show up, despite the shipmate's scepticism that "he may not" (10), the ship remains one hand short till the end of the journey, thus justifying Mr. Baker's scepticism. Besides,

embodying the manner in which his name appears on the list, Wait, throughout the rest of the narrative, is cast as a 'smudge' on the existence of the ship and on the conscience of its men.

A further examination of this incident reveals that Wait's dramatic entry onto the deck of the forecastle is captured through the stark contrasts of light and darkness, black and white, distinct and shadowy features; and it is in that static moment that he is identified as "nigger":

> The lamplight lit up the man's body. He was tall. His head was away up in the shadows of lifeboats that stood on skids above the deck. The whites of his eyes and his teeth gleamed distinctly, but the face was indistinguishable. His hands were big and seemed gloved.
> […]
> The boy, amazed like the rest, raised the light to the man's face. It was black. A surprised hum—a faint hum that sounded like the suppressed mutter of the word "Nigger"—ran along the deck and escaped out into the night. The nigger seemed not to hear. He balanced himself where he stood in a swagger that marked time. After a moment he said calmly: —"My name is Wait—James Wait." (*Narcissus* 10)

In this metaphorical representation of Wait, Conrad deploys the use of contrast to stage a theatrical image of the character. Through the description, the readers gaze literally follows the lamplight in its gradual revelation of the character, as it travels up his tall frame. Directed by this light, the reader perceives parts of the character's body that already drop hints of a difference based on contrast, that is prefigured by the very light facilitating his revelation. Thus, in line with this technique of contrast, the character's head, which is 'away up in the shadows', only presents a vivid image of the 'whites of his eyes and his teeth' which 'gleamed distinctly' while his face remains 'indistinguishable'. When the lamp is finally raised to his face, it reveals that his face is 'black', in sharp contrast to the white teeth and eyes already perceived. In relation to this use of contrast to depict Wait as different, I draw again on Stuart Hall's analysis of difference in which he argues that meaning is relational and that it depends on the difference between opposites (242). In connection to this, Hall further points out that it is possible to know what a term means by thinking about what it is not: therefore, we know what "black" means because we can contrast it

with “white”, which it is not. Thus, it is in relation to the one term that the other derives or draws meaning. This constructs a binary formation which post-structuralism, however, deconstructs precisely because it always harbours a hierarchy where the one term – white – is valued over and above the other – black. The counterpoint to thinking about difference in this way is that although it helps us to appreciate the diversity of the world from the perspective of opposites, it is also reductionist in the sense that values or ideas really exist in varying degrees of nuanced double-binds rather than in pure either/or extremes. So, there is no pure form of “black” or “white” as there is no pure form, for instance, of “day” or “night”, thus subverting the rigidity of the two-term structure of binary oppositions. Nevertheless, when the structure of binary oppositions enabled by such differentiation is sustained as it is in Conrad’s text, it subtly begets the uncomfortable predication of power relations. As Jacques Derrida observes, meaning, often derived through the creation of binary oppositions, privileges one half of the two-part structure as always the dominant form while the completing half remains inferior: “**man**/woman”, “**upper class**/ lower class”. This forms a “violent hierarchy [in which] one of the terms governs the other” (Derrida 41). In the depiction of Conrad’s main character, such a two-part structure is compellingly revealed in the persistent reference to Wait’s skin colour in contrast to his surroundings, or even to other physical features of his own body, such as the whiteness of his teeth and his eyes. However, despite these sharp contrasts between light and darkness, black and white, the suggestion of shadows and, initially, indistinguishable features indicate the subversion of the tendency to wholly define the character as representing one thing or another by pinning onto him pure notions of subjectivity, which is presumed complete only based on the dominant idea of an assumption of what the character must look like. This disruption of the presumed notion of a complete subject is marked by the murmur of surprise that accompanies the revelation of Wait’s face as ‘black’, and the ensuing description of him as a ‘nigger’. In a further subversion of their presumptions, we observe, through the narrator’s account, that the character defies this description by seeming ‘not to hear’ the use of the N-word in reference to him. Besides, upon the mention of this word, the character’s posture of balancing himself as he ‘stood in a swagger that marked time’ reflects a confident and self-important attitude that reinforces his defiance. Additionally, the character overturns the stereotyping associated with the fact of being identified by the N-word by asserting his individuality through the mention of his name: ‘James Wait’. In this self-assertion lies evidence of a clear attempt to redefine the power relations between the describer and the described. This

indicates the character's dismantling of a presumed order and, to pun on his name, a weighting against an established system of representation through his insistence on representing himself. While in this case the character's defiance of stereotyping clearly has the positive effect of affirming his personality – confident and dignified, much later in the narrative, his indulgent, and rather condescending, attitude to arrogate to himself the favours of his shipmates while all along pretending to be ill rebounds on him with the effect that, throughout the narration, he is persistently referenced and signified by the N-word, which, occurring forty-five times in the text, is used ten times more than his actual name. This frequency is only outmatched by the use of the diminutive form of his name – Jimmy – which itself plays down his over-valued self through the false endearment expressed by his shipmates: "we all lovingly called him Jimmy, to conceal our hate…" (*Narcissus* 22).

While Wait is primarily marked by his skin colour, which invariably signifies his race with the historical inferiority and negative qualities attached to it, in the depiction of Donkin, Conrad stacks the cards so high up against him that the character is irretrievably 'seen' as despicably different – and so, Other, even though he is white and so originally belongs to the presumed standard group. As this depiction is crucial to the point that I am making, it is worth quoting at length Conrad's detailed description of Donkin:

> He stood with arms akimbo, a little fellow with white eyelashes. He looked as if he had known all the degradations and all the furies. He looked as if he had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud; he looked as if he had been scratched, spat upon, pelted with unmentionable filth... and he smiled with a sense of security at the faces around. His ears were bending down under the weight of his battered felt hat. The torn tails of his black coat flapped in fringes about the calves of his legs. He unbuttoned the only two buttons that remained and every one saw that he had no shirt under it. It was his deserved misfortune that those rags which nobody could possibly be supposed to own looked on him as if they had been stolen. His neck was long and thin; his eyelids were red; rare hairs hung about his jaws; his shoulders were peaked and drooped like the broken wings of a bird; all his left side was caked with mud which showed that he had lately slept in a wet ditch. He had saved his inefficient carcass from violent destruction by running away from an American ship where, in a moment of forgetful folly, he had dared to engage himself; and he had

> knocked about for a fortnight ashore in the native quarter, cadging for drinks, starving, sleeping on rubbish-heaps, wandering in sunshine: a startling visitor from a world of nightmares. He stood repulsive and smiling in the sudden silence. This clean white forecastle was his refuge; the place where he could be lazy; where he could wallow, and lie and eat—and curse the food he ate; where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he could find surely some one to wheedle and some one to bully—and where he would be paid for doing all this. (*Narcissus* 5-6).

In the first sentence of this description, the reference to Donkin as a 'little fellow with white eyelashes' prepares the reader for the belittling of his character which follows soon after. The description of his eyelashes as white may be indicative of albinism, which also ties in with the earlier reference to him as having 'shifty eyes' and a 'yellow' face. This allusion to albinism points to an inescapable difference that marks the character out for social discrimination in relation to the image that it evokes. Possibly because of his clearly visible difference in appearance from the vast majority, Donkin becomes an easy target for ridicule on the ship. However, even though he is consistently disparaged in this description and throughout the rest of the narrative, his posture when we encounter him – standing 'with arms akimbo' – drops hints of a nonchalant individual who is very much aware of his despicability but who is nonetheless unruffled by such opinions that others may have of him. In fact, just as I have indicated above in relation to Wait's posture, Donkin's posture may equally be suggestive of defiance in the face of scorn. This hint at a sense of defiance also depicts the self-assuredness of a person who is accustomed to being the recipient of abuse and scorn, and who is confident in his ability to pull through such degrading treatment. Endorsing this idea, the narrator extends this hint of the character's indifference to abuse by immediately following that first line with three parallel phrases that consolidate the image of defiance and doggedness in the character of Donkin: "He looked as if he had known all the degradations and all the furies. He looked as if he had been cuffed, kicked, rolled in the mud; he looked as if he had been scratched, spat upon, pelted with unmentionable filth…." The ellipses that follow these parallel lines suggest the further possibility of citing an endless list of degradations that Donkin may have been subject to. Then, the capping phrase, "and he smiled with a sense of security at the faces around", combine with the parallel structure to reinforce the suggestion of his defiant and dogged nature. In a sustained depiction of Donkin as an awful looking

character, the narrator turns his focus onto his attire. He first begins with his 'battered felt heart', then draws attention to his tattered black coat and then directs the readers gaze to Donkin's, perhaps casual, action of unbuttoning the 'only two buttons' left on his coat to reveal that he wore no shirt underneath his coat. After directing the reader to mentally size up the character in this manner, the narrator provides a further critique of Donkin based on his poorly attired appearance as he states: "It was his deserved misfortune that those rags which nobody could possibly be supposed to own looked on him as if they had been stolen". By qualifying Donkin's hapless character profiling as a possible thief with the term 'deserved', the narrator suggests that Donkin has rightly earned himself that opinion because of the negative qualities that he has so far shown. So, through his choice of words, it is obvious that the narrator at once tries to counter any sympathy that one might possibly feel for Donkin while he also attempts to justify his negative assessment of the character. Thus, in the suggestion that he could also be a thief, Donkin is once again depicted as a despicable character, and as someone of whom others would want to be wary. Besides, the stark contrast drawn between the notions of property and theft in relation to this suggestion presage Donkin's actual barefaced theft of James Wait's money towards the end of the narrative.

The portrayal of Donkin as a loathsome character is further reinforced as the narrator consistently draws the reader's attention to other physical features that consolidate the fact. Described as having a 'long and thin' neck, red eyelids, rare hairs around his jaws, and shoulders that 'were peaked and drooped like the broken wings of a bird', Donkin is portrayed as gaunt and cadaverous. Through the metaphor of a bird with broken wings, he is depicted as being in a completely fallen state that could imply a shortfall from an expected standard. Besides, the fact that the whole of his left side was 'caked with mud which showed that he had lately slept in a wet ditch', presents Donkin as repulsive and dirty. In this depiction, the character is cast as bearing a tainted or dirty whiteness that does not conform to the standard. This characterisation of Donkin evokes Mary Douglas's notion of dirt or uncleanliness considered as "matter out of place" which needs to be excluded (Douglas 41). Influenced by the extensive analysis of pollution and taboo by Douglas, Julia Kristeva, in her discourse on subjectivity and difference, asserts that such concepts which legitimise exclusion, or even expulsion of that which is considered unclean, result in the identification of an Other who deviates from the standard because it represents a disruption of order or propriety (Kristeva 4). In her analysis, Kristeva emphasises that this Other is qualified as such not primarily because it is unclean, but because it represents an abjection that "disturbs

identity, system and order" (4). In an extended clarification, she indicates that the abject signifies a relationship to a boundary marking a society or a subject. Thus, it represents that which is "jettisoned out of that boundary" as it poses a threat to the unity and identity of the boundary (69). As we connect the metaphor of a broken-winged or paralysed bird to the mental image of a muddied Donkin, the reader is presented with the imagery of a floundering individual who exists on the margins of society, and whose presence and attitude calls into question the boundaries upon which that society is constructed. The intimation that he had freely, without compulsion, slept in a wet ditch points to the fact that Donkin's abject depiction as a riff-raff is not only suggested by the narrator, but is also actively performed by the character himself. In such a performance of his abjection, he proves to be only minimally functional in his undignified condition that typically places him among the dregs of society. This performance of his identity as a societal scum is further exemplified in the extra details that the narrator reveals of him 'running away from an American ship' which he found perilous to his existence because, there, he could not shirk work and get away with laziness (as American ships were notorious for the harsh treatment of their crew). After he absconds, Donkin continues to prove himself a scoundrel as he knocks about ashore, "cadging for drinks, starving, sleeping on rubbish-heaps" and just loitering about. Referring thus to him as 'a startling visitor from a world of nightmares', the narrator's overall description of Donkin stereotypes him as a lowlife, who sees the 'clean white forecastle' as the place where he can live out all his lousy attributes without fear of a harsh reprimand. This is partly due to the fact that most of the crew members had been newly recruited onto the ship and were only coming together for the first time (*Narcissus* 1-2). So, since the individual members, both old and new, were now warming up to each other, there could hardly be any alliance against him. However, there were still expected, though tacit, standards to meet, and the fact that Donkin's chosen place of refuge is described as 'clean and white' symbolises such an expected standard, which even he, who falls abysmally short of such a description, may aspire to.

In these references to Donkin, it is evident that he has been cast as representative of a certain class of people – loafers. Thus, he is different but in the sense that he can be identified as conforming to a certain class. Through this manner of differentiation, the narrator further extends the description of his character to depict him as the quintessential model of a particular type that, in being universal, can be identified in every corner of the earth:

> They all knew him. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence? […] They all knew him! He was the man that cannot steer, that cannot splice, that dodges the work on dark nights; that, aloft, holds on frantically with both arms and legs, and swears at the wind, the sleet, the darkness; the man who curses the sea while others work. The man who is the last out and the first in when all hands are called. The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest. The pet of philanthropists and self-seeking landlubbers. The sympathetic and deserving creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance, and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty that knits together a ship's company. The independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums full of disdain and hate for the austere servitude of the sea. (*Narcissus* 6).

Here, Conrad moves from the particular to the universal in his classification of Donkin. In this shift, Conrad symbolises the character as 'an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence'. This grim description that casts the character in the nature of falsehood and shamelessness recalls the allusion to Donkin as a 'startling visitor from the world of nightmares'. Thus, through a representational inauspicious familiarity with the kind of person Donkin is, the crew members, even though they were seeing Donkin, for the first time, could already claim to know him because they associate with his appearance and personality certain traits that are characteristic of the loutish image that he evokes. According to Sander Gilman, people characteristically, make sense of the world by categorizing things into 'types' (17). We do this by placing things into broad categories based on the fact that these things share similar characteristics. In this way, we are able to classify things more meaningfully, and also use them as points or frame of references to make inferences about other things that bear a similarity to the classified type. Stating that this is a common practice among humans, Sanders asserts that it is another method through which difference is marked in order to establish meaning (17). So, for instance, it is normal to ascribe certain qualities to people based on depictions of them as pilots, students, or farmers. Invariably, this sort of classification of people typically leads to stereotyping. While stereotyping consists in such a classification into categories that could suggest significant inferences, the result is that it also fixes the classified persons to certain basic and often over-exaggerated traits associated with such categorization, admitting no possible variations from the, sometimes, (over)-

determined characteristics, and therefore insisting on these attributes as natural. As a result, it becomes accepted that whatever needs to be known about the individual is summed up in the characteristics of the stereotype, and any intricacies are often disregarded and wholly repudiated. In consequence, the stereotype essentially defines the person. It is through this manner of stereotyping that Donkin is described as a sort of everyman true to his kind. And in remaining true to his nature, he invariably excludes himself from the rest of the crew who, though coming together for the first time, are knit together by 'courage', 'endurance', 'unexpressed faith', and 'unspoken loyalty', all of which, are described as foreign to the ignoble Donkin.

To emphasise or possibly prompt the expected reaction to such a character, Conrad prescribes a universal aversion towards him expressed in the action of one of the crew-members, who is unnamed: "A taciturn long-armed shellback, with hooked fingers, who had been lying on his back smoking, turned in his bed to examine him dispassionately, then, over his head, sent a long jet of clear saliva towards the door" (*Narcissus* 6). This unnamed crew-member could very well be anybody and the spitting towards the door seems to connote such utter disdain that would cause anyone to probably want to toss this Donkin-type out of the door, discarding him altogether. Besides, in identifying this unnamed character as a 'shellback, with hooked fingers', Conrad alludes to the endurance of an old and well-travelled sailor who has put in his fair share of hard work testified to by the hooked nature of his fingers. These allusions to experience and diligence plainly contrast with Donkin's reckless and lazy nature. It is clearly the stark contrast drawn between these two incompatible natures that provokes a revulsion towards Donkin symbolised in the act of spitting. However, upon such a person as Donkin, who, as we have learnt earlier, is used to being spat at or treated with disdain, this sign of aversion has no effect. And, of course, he remains a member of the crew despite the revulsion towards him because of his abject nature. This evokes once again Kristeva's notion of the abject as being inherently a part of the system which repulses it; as it grips the system even while it is repelled by it (135). Mostly portrayed in this manner, Donkin's position on the ship is confirmed by the narrator as "distinguished but unsafe" as he typically stands "on the bad eminence of a general dislike" (*Narcissus* 24).

Thus, in Conrad's depictions of the two characters that I identify as Othered, Donkin is portrayed as the underdog whose contempt for and rebellion against the ordered system cast him mostly as the mutinous Other who poses the threat of anarchy to the system. Wait, on the other

hand, is depicted as a terrorising Other who insists on being recognised and acknowledged, if certainly not loved, by imposing his will on others, forcing them to wait on and serve him, even if grudgingly, and so completely obstructs the norm through his overbearing nature. However, as the narrative unfolds, it becomes evident that these separate representations are in no way pinned to these characters as their roles become confounded and even inverted in their respective functions. For Donkin perpetually incites the rest of the crew to near-mutiny, thus obstructing the conventional order of this nautical universe, while Wait becomes the ultimate loser despite his effort to deceive the whole crew by initially pretending to be sick to avoid work only for him, in the end, to surely die of his diseased lungs while steeped in his own self-deceit. In their conflating representations, an important trope that significantly binds these two to each other is the concept of the confidence trickster or the con-man. Throughout the narrative, we observe that both Donkin and Wait display con-man tendencies as they strive to assert themselves. They do not only employ these ruses on their shipmates, but also on each other, especially Donkin on Wait, in an unconscious besting match. While in all cases, they use their conning schemes to gain advantage in their individual situations, this trait also points to an effort to influence the power balance in their favour. As I have alluded to earlier, differentiation of the Other through a stereotyped image systematises the subtle play of power relations, especially those that prevail between the represented and the culture and/or system doing the representing. In the *Narcissus*, the power play exists between the Othered pair respectively and the rest of the ship's crew, against whom they are defined. This hegemonic disparity points to a splitting between the individuals and the group. As Gilman points out, splitting is another strategy employed by the technique of stereotyping to indicate difference. It reinforces binaries, specifically making it possible for one to distinguish "between control and loss of control, between acquiescence and denial" (17). Thus, the degree of control that an individual exercises over the way in which they are represented corresponds to that individual's compliance to or resistance of the image by which they are represented. Therefore, the stereotyped subject upon whom an inferior image is cast can repudiate such stereotyping by gaining control over the entity or the system that confines it to the stereotype.

From this perspective, it becomes clear that the way in which Donkin projects onto the other crew-members his conceited discontent and tries to topple the authority of Captain Allistoun, and of the other officers on the ship is evidence of a battle for control, most likely in the interest

of self-preservation. Feeling isolated and deprived due to his overall appearance and lack of clothing, he envies his shipmates and expresses this through his insolence towards all, including, and especially more, towards the officers. Through the narrator we learn that Donkin, loathsome and lazy, was generally "left alone" (24):

> ….and in his isolation he could do nothing but think of the gales of the Cape of Good Hope and envy us the possession of warm clothing and waterproofs. Our sea-boots, our oilskin coats, our well-filled sea-chests, were to him so many causes for bitter meditation: he had none of those things, and he felt instinctively that no man, when the need arose, would offer to share them with him. He was impudently cringing to us and systematically insolent to the officers. He anticipated the best results, for himself, from such a line of conduct—and he was mistaken. Such natures forget that under extreme provocation men will be just—whether they want to be so or not. (*Narcissus* 24).

In this account, Donkin's penury and his instinctive feeling of possibly being treated meanly evokes sympathy and runs counter to the overall aversion towards him. The narrator betrays a hint of this sympathy while he states his belief in the human propensity to be charitable in the face of crisis. From the standpoint of these empathetic undercurrents, the narrator then seems to deplore what he considers Donkin's rather blinkered view of his situation and his misjudgement of his shipmates. In his deprecation, he reveals that Donkin, who has already been depicted as deprived and shameless, takes on an even more insolent attitude towards the rest of the crew because he begrudges them their possessions in the face of his lack. As observed by the narrator, Donkin probably thought that through his impertinence he might be able to get an advantage over some of the crew, perhaps by bullying them into sharing their things with him when it became most necessary. However, the narrator deemed this attitude unnecessary since, in his opinion, if it became critical, he believed that the men would demonstrate a soundness of moral judgement and fairly share, even if grudgingly. Yet, Donkin persists in this arrogance to the extent that, at the height of his insolence, he upsets the order on the ship and creates confusion by trying to sway his shipmates to disregard the Captain's orders and take orders from him instead. In this first attempt to usurp power, Donkin capitalises on the crew's displeasure with the Captain who decidedly puts the ship at risk during a particularly bad spell when they encounter a storm. The ship turns on her

side and the whole crew scream for the masts to be cut: "They all yelled unceasingly: - 'The masts! Cut! Cut!'" (36). However, in the anarchy of the moment, Captain Allistoun yells his command "No", and this command is taken up and echoed around the confused ship. While the rest of the crew heed the command of the Captain and do what else they can to contain the situation without having to cut the masts, Donkin alone continues to yell for the masts to be cut as he "shouted curses at the master, shook his fist at him with horrible blasphemies, [and] called upon [the crew] in filthy words to 'Cut! Don't mind that murdering fool! Cut, some of you!'" (37). He is finally silenced by "a back-handed blow over the mouth" (37) from a crew-member who has just helped to rescue him from slipping over the side. Much later after the storm has passed and some order is restored on the ship, Donkin launches into a speech of grievances to the crew about how much they work for so little pay and how they constantly put their lives at risk, sacrificing so much for such little gratitude from the command. Despite the overall derision for his lazy and contemptuous attitude, the crew actually listen to him:

> We remembered our danger, our toil—and conveniently forgot our horrible scare. We decried our officers—who had done nothing—and listened to the fascinating Donkin. His care for our rights, his disinterested concern for our dignity, were not discouraged by the invariable contumely of our words, by the disdain of our looks. Our contempt for him was unbounded—and we could not but listen with interest to that consummate artist (*Narcissus* 61)

From this account, we observe that even though the crew persistently ill-treat Donkin in their contempt for him, they are swayed by his speech and pay attention to his rationalisation of their situation. What we cannot miss, however, in the narrator's description is the reference to Donkin as a 'consummate artist'. From Philipp Schweighauser's revision of art in his work *Beautiful Deceptions*, it is worth noting that art over time has been taken to also mean deception (10). In this regard, the reference here to Donkin ultimately depicts him as highly skilled at deception. Therefore, it is obvious that the word 'artist' as used here implies con artist, a reference that extends from the narrator's suggestion that Donkin, demonstrating his con skills by sensationalising the condition of the crew members, manages to defraud their consciences. Through his sensational speech he causes a sense of general dissatisfaction among the crew which results in a rift between the men and the command. Further consolidating this suggestion of Donkin as a con artist with

reference to this same situation, Conrad states that Donkin's "picturesque and filthy loquacity flowed like a troubled stream from a poisoned source" (62). In piling up the use of adjectives with negative connotations – filthy, troubled, poisoned – Conrad, in this description, portrays Donkin as a rabble-rouser whose sole interest is to assert himself in some way, even if negatively through mutiny. And in his attempt to do this he projects onto the rest of the crew, through his speech, these negative traits that, earlier on in the narrative, have often been alluded to in connection with his character. Despite Donkin's near-success at instigating his shipmates against the Captain and his officers, he is soon silenced and the Captain's control and superiority are reasserted. As Daniel Schwarz indicates, "Donkin is Conrad's gross caricature of a political thinker" who offers hope with "temporary formulas" and a "misguided sentimentalism" (42). This observation by Schwarz recalls Conrad's reference to Wait as mocking the sentimentalism of his shipmates, a fact that demonstrates that, in the shared fact of their portrayal as conmen, both Donkin and Wait abuse the sentimentalism of their shipmates. this ties in with a standard reproach against sentimentalism as tear-jerkingly manipulating our affections. In the case of Donkin, for instance, this is depicted right at the beginning of the narrative, when he appeals to the men for spare clothing after he has told an obvious tale of how he escaped lynching for standing up for his rights on an earlier ship. He claims he ran off that ship, leaving his belongings behind in the process. Even though they are certain of his lousy character, they offer him their spare articles in an expression of kindness. Recounting this, Conrad states:

> He knew how to conquer the naïve instincts of that crowd. In a moment they gave him their compassion, jocularly, contemptuously, or surlily; and at first it took the shape of a blanket thrown at him as he stood there with the white skin of his limbs showing his human kinship through the black fantasy of his rags. Then a pair of old shoes fell at his muddy feet. […] a rolled-up pair of canvas trousers… The gust of their benevolence sent a wave of sentimental pity through their doubting hearts. They were touched by their own readiness to alleviate a shipmate's misery. (*Narcissus* 7)

In this description, Donkin demonstrates an ability to 'conquer' the emotions of the crew by appealing to their 'naïve instincts'. The influence he obtains over them is depicted in their prompt sympathetic response to his deprived condition. In his elaboration of the 'benevolence' of the men,

the author states that through their own demonstration of kindness, a 'sentimental pity' is aroused in them. He furthermore alludes to the possibility that this sentimentalism may have additionally been inspired through the hint of the character's shared humanity indicated in the fact of his 'white skin' tainted by 'the black fantasy of his rags'. As the characters of Donkin and Wait are revealed through the rest of the narrative, it becomes evident that what they take advantage of to dupe the sentimentality of their shipmates is the empathy that they receive because of such a suggestion of a shared humanity. In *Beautiful Deceptions*, Schweighauser points out that, in sentimental novels, this sense of a shared humanity establishes "emotional bonds between characters" (115) to the extent that even "faked emotional distress can call forth heartfelt sympathy" (114). Stating that such "sympathetic identification" is the problem that "haunts sentimentalism" for the fact that "its emotional appeals" may be based on deception (114), Schweighauser, further demonstrates that such affective identification depicts what Dobson refers to as the "emotional and philosophical ethos" of sentimentalism which "celebrates human connection, both personal and communal, and acknowledges the shared devastation of affectional loss" (Dobson 266 cited in Schweighauser 115). Examining the affective influence of both Donkin and Wait over the crew from this perspective, it is obvious that it is as a result of the men's tendency to sympathetically identify with these, albeit dubious, characters that they are emotionally duped by them. In effect, as alluded to above, the men respond with compassion to Donkin's plight even though they do so with "doubting hearts" about the veracity of his claims. Donkin, on the other hand, obviously dupes them by exploiting their emotions, and, as earlier discussed, by also unnecessarily drawing their attention to and sensationalising their working conditions. This exploitation, exhibited by Donkin, of the men's affective tendencies, is even more acutely employed by Wait who uses his sickness and the persistent reminder of his imminent death to bully the other crew-members into "a weird servitude" (26). Thus, he makes the men submit to his every whim, so that, for instance, they cannot talk loudly or sing because that is too noisy for him, and they give him the best portion of the meals even while he constantly abuses them and shows no appreciation for their efforts:

> Our singers became mute because Jimmy was a dying man. For the same reason no chap… could 'drive a nail to hang his few poor rags upon,' without being made aware of the enormity he committed in disturbing Jimmy's interminable last moments. At night, […] the watches were called man by man, in whispers, so as not to interfere with Jimmy's, possibly, last slumber on earth. True, he was always

> awake, and managed, as we sneaked out on deck, to plant in our backs some cutting remark that, for the moment, made us feel as if we had been brutes, and afterwards made us suspect ourselves of being fools. We spoke in low tones within that fo'c'sle as though it had been a church. We ate our meals in silence and dread, for Jimmy was capricious with his food, and railed bitterly at the salt meat, at the biscuits, at the tea, as at articles unfit for human consumption—'let alone for a dying man!' He would say:—'Can't you find a better slice of meat for a sick man …? But there! If I had a chance, you fellows would do away with it. You would poison me. Look at what you have given me!' We served him in his bed with rage and humility, as though we had been the base courtiers of a hated prince; and he rewarded us by his unconciliating criticism. He had found the secret of keeping for ever on the run the fundamental imbecility of mankind; he had the secret of life, that confounded dying man, and he made himself master of every moment of our existence. We grew desperate, and remained submissive. (*Narcissus* 22-23).

In this account, the narrator outlines the numerous ways in which Wait manipulates the crew on the basis of his purported ill-health and his claim to be dying. In an extreme exploitation that deprives his shipmates of the ability to indulge themselves or to carry out their duties freely, Wait tyrannizes the ship as he casts the morbid mood of his alleged approaching death over the crew. As a result, the crew feel inhibited in their foisted consideration of him. Their expression of joviality is 'muted' and even essential actions that may be performed towards certain needs (such as driving a nail to hang clothes) are hindered. In this already stifled atmosphere, Wait does not cease to vilify the men at the least opportunity, making them feel morally deficient and apprehensive of their own personalities. In his continued disparaging treatment of the men, Wait additionally criticises the meals he is served and even goes as far as to accuse his shipmates of the possibility of poisoning him. Despite the aspersions he casts on the men, they continue to serve him and continue to be ruled by him, as implied through the metaphor of the 'base courtiers of a hated prince'. This notion of Wait ruling, tyrannically, over the lives of the men is later reiterated in the narrator's assertion: "He became the tormentor of all our moments; he was worse than a nightmare" (27). Yet, despite their despair due to the persecution they suffer from Wait, they remain 'submissive'. Following from this account of the crew's servitude towards Wait, I point out that the character routinely imposes upon the crew a performance of the literal pun on his

name: he gets them to wait on him, in spite of themselves. He achieves this by capitalising on their emotions and making them feel morally obliged to respect the last wishes of a dying man. Nevertheless, the narrator further reveals that even while they acquiesce to his appeal to their sympathy, they cannot help feeling or suspecting that they are being conned. Expressing this suspicion, he states:

> And we hated James Wait. We could not get rid of the monstrous suspicion that this astounding black man was shamming sick, had been malingering heartlessly in the face of our toil, of our scorn, of our patience—and was now malingering in the face of our devotion—in the face of death. Our vague and imperfect morality rose with disgust at his manly lie. But he stuck to it manfully—amazingly. (*Narcissus*, 44-45).

Notably, this assertion of the shipmates' hatred for Wait is made at a time when the character is genuinely in distress: he is trapped in a locked-down hatch during a violent storm and the crew set out to rescue him. Whereas this statement reveals that the crew suspects Wait of pretending to be sick and abusing their benevolence towards him, it also reveals their disgust at his attitude to persistently hold on to the suspected falsehood. Thus, while they yet treat him with consideration based on his claim of sickness, they cannot help feeling that they are also being hoodwinked. This notwithstanding, they remain devoted to him at the risk of their own lives, as they neglect the imperilled ship and misdirect their efforts to save Wait. Thus, they continue to 'wait' on him, even in the face of death. While the narrator's allusion to a 'monstrous suspicion' and a 'manly lie' insinuates the men's increasing doubt about Wait's claims, to the reader, it is already clear that the character has achieved this feat of winning the undying allegiance of the crew through a sustained act of deception. From this perspective, he fully evokes the concept of signifying as it is used in African-American discourse, and specifically in reference to the Signifying Monkey. It is important to point out, however, that while Gates' analysis of signifyin(g) takes a more affirmative turn in his reading of the practice as a positive activity, in my reading of the *Narcissus* through this concept I identify that Conrad explores the flipsides of this practice that Gates affirms. In his analysis of the concept, Gates explains that the symbolic figure of the Signifying Monkey is the "'signifier as such'" (689), to the extent that it embodies all the modes of signifying within African-American discourse. Noting that the Signifying Monkey, representing "black mythology's

archetypal signifier, […] is a trickster figure" (687), Gates further points out that "as tricksters [such figures] are mediators and their mediations are tricks" (687). Drawing on Roger Abrahams, Gates moreover posits that from the standpoint of African-American cultural discourse, signifying "certainly refers to the trickster's ability to talk with great innuendo, to carp, cajole, needle, and lie" (689). Referring to these extended implications of the meaning of signifying as expounded by Gates, I note that it is interesting to view Wait, in his manipulation of his shipmates, as exemplifying such a trickster character. This is evidenced in the fact that he uses deception to sway the emotions of his shipmates and to cause them to pander to his whims without pausing for a moment of scepticism. In relation to this, I draw further on Gates and argue that through his name (Wait, *nomen est omen*), the character signifies upon the rest of the crew as he cons them into becoming submissive to him. In this manner, Wait, bearing upon the other men the full significance of his name, can be seen, again through Gates' notion of signification, as signifying upon the men. To further understand the characterisation of Wait, it is instructive to note Gates' assertion that "in black discourse 'signifying' means modes of figuration itself" (687). An examination of the character with these notions in mind reveals that Wait displays many of these tropes, which therefore capture him in these signifying modes of figuration. As earlier mentioned, we find that he is marked for his race and colour, and that he defies the description of him as a 'nigger' by calling out his name (10). Besides, our attention is also persistently drawn to his booming voice (11), and in his later admission to Donkin that he is not sick (68), he demonstrates what Geneva Smitherman calls the "semi-serious tradition of 'lying'" (Smitherman 79) which, in black discourse, forms part of a rhetorical performance that signifies the individual within his social and cultural space. Following from this idea of performance in black discourse, Gates' statement that signifying implies modes of figuration – that is, allegorical representation – elucidates the portrayal of Wait as allegorically representative of the universe of the Narcissus where the moral qualities of its men are evaluated. These qualities are examined through Wait's character which highlights the excesses of negative moral responsibility towards others. However, while Wait, embodying morality, is literally held up to the light of scrutiny in this way, his inclination to self-gratification is compensated by Singleton who, alone among the men, remains unmoved by Wait's ruses, and displays an unwavering commitment to the business of steering the ship. Displaying, thus, a steadfastness to a purpose, Singleton commits to that which is right and in the long run beneficial to all within this microcosmic universe, while Wait is steeped in self-indulgence to his own

detriment. Consequently, in the fact of its redeeming nature, Singleton's resoluteness, which helps to keep the ship on its homeward course, contradicts Wait's act of sticking 'manfully' to his 'manly lie', which in the end destroys him. It then becomes obvious that in upholding falsehood, Wait shirks a moral responsibility towards his shipmates, and it is clearly this moral neglect that eventually results in his demise. Once again, in this regard, I necessarily emphasise that Gates gives a far more affirmative notion of signifyin(g) as creative word play as opposed to Wait's audacious lying and deception, portrayed mostly as adverse, in the *Narcissus*. A similarity can, however, be identified between the outcome of such signifyin(g) both in the *Narcissus* as in Gates' discussion of the concept with reference to the Monkey figure of this African-American practice. For just as in Conrad's text, Wait's demise results from his deception, in the African-American myth, the trickster Monkey receives a retributive trouncing from the Lion who, after being himself trounced by the Elephant, ultimately realises that he has been fooled by the Monkey into going to confront the Elephant who purportedly insulted him (the Lion).

From the foregoing, I assert that to the representation of Wait as a con artist is also strongly associated the motif of falsehood. Wait is indeed unwell right from the beginning and shows signs of this in his sluggish attitude towards work on the ship. The narrator reveals that all the men "remarked that Jimmy from the first was very slack at his work, but [they] thought it simply the outcome of his philosophy of life" (27). However, when, for his languid movement, he is reprimanded by one of the officers, who scolds "what's the matter with your hind legs?", Wait answers morbidly: "it isn't my legs, … it's my lungs. […] Can't you see I'm a dying man? I know it!" (27). Thus, it is evident that he is unwell and is aware of it. Even so, the manner and intensity with which he seems to revel in his condition, especially since it gives him an excuse to avoid work and to bully his fellow shipmates into serving him, makes him subject to that "monstrous suspicion" of a lie that the narrator alludes to and for which reason he is hated: "we hated him because of the suspicion; we detested him because of the doubt" (45). Thus, he is captured as an embodiment of falsehood which begets suspicion and doubt. Yet, it is also evident that it is through this trope of falsehood that we can understand the magnitude of Wait's control over his shipmates. For, it is because of their uncertainty about the actual severity of Wait's condition, and their desire to escape the guilt of callousness to a dying man, that the crew become trapped in servitude to him. As the narrator recounts:

> We were trying to be decent chaps, and found it jolly difficult; we oscillated between the desire of virtue and the fear of ridicule; we wished to save ourselves from the pain of remorse, but did not want to be made the contemptible dupes of our sentiment. (25)

For fear of being considered indecent, very likely in the sense of failing to show compassion to a dying man, the crew become victims, simultaneously, of their presumed standards of virtue and of their impressionable sentiments. As a result, Wait, capitalising on their doubt to control them, continues to take advantage of their oscillating ideals to impose his will upon them and to project his frustrations onto them. In this regard, Donkin taunts them, stating that they are "an imbecile lot, daily taken in by a vulgar nigger" (25). Towards the end, however, Wait, in the true embodiment of falsehood, is depicted as becoming a victim of his own duplicities. Claiming at one moment that he was a dying man, and then declaring in the next that he was "trying to get home to be cured" (23), Wait seemed to believe more earnestly in the veracity of the latter statement than in any hint of the faintest possibility of the former. That unfortunate lie is his 'truth' with which he deceives himself, which undergirds his overbearing nature, and which eventually transforms him into an Other that symbolically signifies, and is ultimately overcome by death. In a description that demonstrates this, the narrator states:

> […] in the confused current of impotent thoughts that set unceasingly this way and that through bodies of men, Jimmy bobbed up upon the surface, compelling attention, like a black buoy chained to the bottom of a muddy stream. Falsehood triumphed. It triumphed through doubt, through stupidity, through pity, through sentimentalism. We set ourselves to bolster it up from compassion, from recklessness, from a sense of fun. Jimmy's steadfastness to his untruthful attitude in the face of the inevitable truth had the proportions of a colossal enigma—of a manifestation grand and incomprehensible that at times inspired a wondering awe; and there was also, to many, something exquisitely droll in fooling him thus to the top of his bent. The latent egoism of tenderness to suffering appeared in the developing anxiety not to see him die. His obstinate non-recognition of the only certitude whose approach we could watch from day to day was as disquieting as the failure of some law of nature. (85).

At this point in the narrative, the ship has survived a horrible storm but has lost a lot of its supplies to the storm. As the crew try to steer it homewards, they persistently encounter bad weather and it seems as though the ship "has forgotten the way home" (88) as it tosses about aimlessly in strong head winds. Due to the shortage of supplies, the crew, surviving on small rations, endure hunger and have gradually become pensive. It is in such a moment when conversation is absent and each crew member is deeply engrossed in their own 'confused current of impotent thoughts' that Jimmy is described as 'bobb[ing] up upon the surface'. The surface here indicates the deck and so implies that Jimmy has come up deck out of his cabin. However, the use of the verb 'bob' to describe his appearance on deck connotes a suddenness that distracts and 'compel[s] attention'. This notion of Jimmy distracting his shipmates and 'compelling attention' underscores his control over them. However, in extending the image evoked by the word 'bob' by introducing the metaphor of a 'black buoy chained to the bottom of a muddy stream', the narrator transcends the moment and portends a subversion and the end of Wait's control. This is indicated through the metaphor of the buoy and its connotative meanings. A buoy is an object that is purposefully left to float in sailing waters to serve as signals or markers of reefs or other hazards below the surface, or to provide mooring for a ship. To best serve its warning purpose, it is normally fluorescent bright in colour. From its extended notion of a signal or a marker, the buoy metaphor used in connection with Wait signals or marks a potentially fatal event, in the likely failure of its function to signal danger. Complementing the use of the verb 'bob' to indicate the buoy's purpose as a float, this likelihood of a failure of function is concretised in the fact that this buoy is 'black' in colour and 'chained to the bottom of a muddy stream,' thus indicating its capriciousness as a marker or a signal. This unreliability is suggested, firstly, because, in being black the buoy is not visible, and, secondly, because in muddy waters, any danger beneath the surface that it might signal is obscured. Therefore, the metaphor carries a double concealment that foils any caution of imminent disaster. While the disaster is the impending death of Jimmy, this fact is unperceived by the character himself through the lie to himself that he is not as sick as he pretends to be and for which reason he secretly disposes of all the medicine given to him, tossing some overboard into the sea and hiding another under his pillow without ever taking a drop (28). It is this act of lying to himself while thinking he is lying to others that constitutes the falsehood that he symbolises and that ultimately engulfs him. From the narrator's observation about Jimmy's 'steadfastness to his untruthful attitude in the face of the inevitable truth', and his 'obstinate non-

recognition of the only certitude' that was obvious to all, he indicates the reality that Jimmy has indeed become stricken by the illness that he has all along feigned. In his own game of deception, he has been trumped and overcome by the falsehood that he embodies; and, as the narrator emphasises, falsehood triumphs in the end. Here again, even though the trickster remains a much more positive figure than Wait, in this notion of being outdone at his own con game, Wait evokes once more the mythological character of the Signifying Monkey, whose tricks always flip back on him in retribution. Thus, in his representation as a trickster similar to this symbolic trickster figure of African-American culture, Wait's ruses are eventually uncovered, causing him to be subjected to retributive measures which invariably result in his death.

While Wait is thus represented as embodying falsehood that results in his demise, it is important to note the role of Donkin, his fellow conman, as an enabler of Wait in his performance of falsehood, and as a catalyst for Wait's eventual demise. This is indicated by the fact that, despite the general suspicion of the crew, Donkin is the only one among the shipmates who actually gets a confession from Wait that he is not half as sick as he is pretending to be. This occurs during an intuitive match of conscience between the two in which Wait chides Donkin for avoiding work with the others and always talking "like a poll-parrot, … a screechin' poll-parrot" (68), who keeps on chattering "like a dirty white cockatoo" (68). In this comparison to a parrot, or a cockatoo, the metaphor of the bird in reference to Donkin is reiterated with the added effect that here, as the bird is specified as a parrot, Wait insinuates that Donkin is only good at talking and, perhaps, more specifically at repeating things he has heard about a person's rights without necessarily knowing what he is talking about. At this slur, Donkin, takes up the challenge to prove to Wait what he knows. Subsequently, he confronts Wait with the knowledge of his deception, stating that his claim of ill health is "a blooming imposyshun. A bloomin', stinkin' first-class imposyshun—but it don't tyke me in" (68). Unsettled, Wait, upon Donkin's confession that he has "seen the inside of every chokey in the Colonies" (68) for obstinately standing up for his rights, refers to Donkin as a "jail-prop" (68), to which he replies: "I am… an' proud of it, too. You! You 'aven't the bloomin' nerve—so you inventyd this 'ere dodge…." (68). Besides the obvious wrangle transpiring between the two, it is important to point out that, here and everywhere else in the narrative, Donkin's speech is much more thoroughly Othered than Wait's. Significantly, Wait's speech and language throughout the narrative is impeccable, and, early in the narrative, the first time the two are captured in a verbal exchange, Wait is depicted as being shocked by the crudity of Donkin's speech

causing him to stare "like a man addressed unexpectedly in a foreign language" (14). When in his crude speech Donkin jokingly requests for "a bit of 'baccy" (tobacco) from Wait, the latter firmly retorts: "Don't be familiar. […] We haven't kept pigs together", thus causing Donkin to be startled in his turn, "out of sheer surprise" (14). In the Othering of the two characters, it is impossible to ignore this focus on their speech. In the evidence that Donkin's crude speech may suggest a baseness of character that falls short of a Eurocentric standard, the twisted contradiction captured in matching his Otherness to Wait's resides in the fact that Wait's own eloquence does not measure up enough to salvage him from an Otherness that is sealed by his racial identity. Thus, in this later exchange in which they verbally spar with each other in what seems to be a match to assert each other's Otherness by subconsciously determining who has the worst traits that exclude them from a centric communality with the rest of the crew, Wait's deception is revealed:

> [Donkin] paused; then with marked afterthought accentuated slowly:—'Yer ain't sick—are yer?'
>
> 'No,' said Jimmy, firmly. 'Been out of sorts now and again this year,' he mumbled with a sudden drop in his voice.
>
> Donkin closed one eye, amicable and confidential. He whispered:—'Ye 'ave done this afore 'aven'tchee?' Jimmy smiled—then as if unable to hold back he let himself go:—'Last ship—yes. I was out of sorts on the passage. See? It was easy. They paid me off in Calcutta, and the skipper made no bones about it either…. I got my money all right. Laid up fifty-eight days! The fools! O Lord! The fools! Paid right off.' He laughed spasmodically. Donkin chimed in giggling. Then Jimmy coughed violently. 'I am as well as ever,' he said, as soon as he could draw breath.
>
> Donkin made a derisive gesture. 'In course,' he said, profoundly, 'any one can see that.'—'They don't,' said Jimmy, gasping like a fish.—'They would swallow any yarn,' affirmed Donkin.—'Don't you let on too much,' admonished Jimmy in an exhausted voice.—'Your little gyme? Eh?' commented Donkin, jovially. Then with sudden disgust: 'Yer all for yerself, s'long as ye're right…' (*Narcissus* 68).

In this exchange that bears the hint of a contest of morality between these two conmen on the ship, Wait's secret is exposed, and so is his egoism which ties in with the symbolism of the name of the ship, Narcissus. Even at this point, it is already evident that his falsehood, in the form of the sickness he has been laying claim to, is stealing upon him. This is suggested through the references to him cough[ing] violently and 'gasp[ing] like a fish'. Thus, Wait cannot escape the performative nature of language, and the sickness he has literally been simulating finally creeps up on him, manifesting into reality. In this regard, I defer to Jean Baudrillard's notion on the difficulty to distinguish between the 'real' and the 'imaginary' or between that which is 'true' or 'false' in the case of persons simulating illness. Expanding this notion from an accepted definition of simulation, he states that a person "who simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms" of the illness (171). This seems to be the case in Wait's simulation of fatal illness. However, in his conceit, he remains unsuspecting of this fact. Rather, he thinks that the rest of the crew are fools, as can be inferred by extending his expression of this opinion regarding the crew of the last ship on which he played a similar hoax by pretending to still be unwell after a brief spell of indisposition. To this confession of successfully fooling the crew, Donkin suggests that this is possible because the men are gullible and "would swallow any yarn". In an earlier reference to the men's gullibility, he already describes them as "a driven lot of sheep" (68), and it is this flaw that both he and Wait, having detected, capitalise on. Upon drawing out the confession, Donkin derides Wait and tells him that he is on his own in his game of deception. By insinuating that he will not be the one to expose his game, Donkin enables Wait's deception by being an accomplice to his deception through his own silence. However, given the fact that Donkin is himself a conman who tries to better his lot – "look after [his] rights (68) – through an altruistic demonstration of concern for others, he uses his knowledge of Wait's deception as a trump card to attempt to once more incite the crew against their officers.

In this second attempt to assert himself against the authority of the command, Donkin builds on the already massaged egos of the petulant crew and capitalises on their sense of grievance to incite them to further rebellion. Despite the fact that Donkin himself shirks work, often leaving his shipmates short of his contribution to their labour, he draws the attention of the men to the fact that Wait has been allowed to lie up while the rest of them must do the work, short of one man. As Donkin uses this argument to incense the men, Wait tries to appease the crew and the command by assuring them that he would return to work the very next day or even immediately. He does this

when he realises that the men have become suspicious of his malingering. However, despite Wait's putative earnestness to return to work, Captain Allistoun refuses to allow him to do this:

> "No. You don't," said the master, curtly. Bare feet shuffled, disapproving voices murmured all round; he went on as if he had not heard:—"You have been skulking nearly all the passage and now you want to come out. You think you are near enough to the pay-table now. Smell the shore, hey?"
>
> "I've been sick... now—better," mumbled Wait, glaring in the light. —"You have been shamming sick," retorted Captain Allistoun with severity; "Why..." he hesitated for less than half a second. "Why, anybody can see that. There's nothing the matter with you, but you choose to lie-up to please yourself—and now you shall lie-up to please me. Mr. Baker, my orders are that this man is not to be allowed on deck to the end of the passage." (*Narcissus* 74)

This exchange between the captain and Wait confirms Donkin's earlier statement that Wait's deception is obvious, or rather has become obvious, to the rest of the crew. What is obvious in this interaction is the shift in Wait's story: that he has been sick, but is better now, as opposed to his earlier statements of being a sick and dying man. Obviously, this revision of his story is yet another gambit, which, however, does not work this time with the captain. Subsequently, the captain orders that he remain confined to his cabin for the rest of the journey. Notably, the prompt shift in Wait's story, points to a performance of identity through a fluidity of language that negates an essentialist construction of subjectivity. By moving from the one notion of 'I am sick and dying' to claiming a different notion of 'I have been sick, but now better', Wait plays out an identity that is conceptually hooked onto the condition of sickness and its pendulating possibilities of either improvement, clearly opposed to wellness, or death. In such a performance of identity, the character defies essentialism defined by absolutes by signifying, through his assumed condition, a variability that also impacts on his personality. With regard to our character, it is important to note that this manner of signifying, central to both a post-structuralist notion of subjectivity as to the work of the con-man, tends to have the centrifugal effect of causing him to become separated from the ship's centre of life and activity – the deck – and also from the rest of the crew as his ruse is uncovered.

As a result of the captain's order, Wait remains confined to his bunk while the rest of the crew start to grumble and throw a row over having to work shorthanded. Capitalising on their already agitated state, Donkin further inflames their passion and instigates them to a strike:

> There were exclamations of surprise, triumph, indignation. The dark group of men swung across the light. "What for?" "Told you so..." "Bloomin' shame..."—"We've got to say somethink about that," screeched Donkin from the rear. […].—"Are we bloomin' masheens?" inquired Donkin in a piercing tone, and dived under the elbows of the front rank.—"Soon show 'im we ain't boys..."—"The man's a man if he is black."—"We ain't goin' to work this bloomin' ship shorthanded if Snowball's all right..."—"He says he is."—"Well then, strike, boys, strike!"—"That's the bloomin' ticket." (*Narcissus* 74)

While Donkin's reference here to Wait as 'Snowball' might be ironic because of the imagery of whiteness that it evokes, it is also interesting for its connotation of Wait as symbolising an object that Donkin metaphorically throws at the crew in a malicious jest. This notion is consolidated by his suggestion to the men that using Wait's situation as the reason to strike is their 'bloomin' ticket'. Thus, extending from the snowball metaphor, I suggest that Donkin uses Wait to pelt the men into believing that they have a justified reason to revolt against their officers, while Donkin himself takes pleasure in the idea of causing such a revolt. In his instigation, the question as to whether they are 'masheens' evokes a recurrent motif in Conrad's writings of the machine which invariably signifies the depersonalisation of individuals caught in an abstract fate. In his recurrent reference to this metaphor, Conrad himself alludes to the Schopenhauerian notion of the blind will that, in its agentic force lacks a conscious purposive striving which is however present in the way the will is experienced. As Mark Wollaeger puts it, "the machine can be read as a … version of Schopenhauer's blind will [which] stands beyond the ward and woof of the reality it determines", or, in its operation, it can represent "a fiction of skepticism cognate with Descartes's *malin génie*" (Wollaeger 68). In the context of Donkin's reference here to the men as machines, both these interpretations of the machine bear relevance to my analysis. First, in the Schopenhauerian sense of a blind will, Donkin is able to incite the men to a senseless near-revolt through his altruistic posturing of fighting for their rights. In their penchant for delusion, the men, failing to think for themselves, are easily swayed by Donkin's manoeuvrings. Secondly, Donkin, included in the

machine analogy through his use of the pronoun 'we', may be seen as signifying the Cartesian evil demon who, as a "malicious deceiver", plays on the scepticism of the men. He at once makes them believe that by demanding that Wait be allowed to work, (as he suddenly claims to be able to), they are asserting their rights; while, at the same time, he causes them to raise questions about their actions so far without giving thought to the immediate action of their revolt. During the tumult, one of the men shouts out: "We have been hymposed upon all this voyage, […] but this 'ere fancy takes the cake" (74); and another yells: "Give is our Jimmy!" (74). The irony of their protests is that they fail to realise that if they have indeed been imposed upon, this has been by Wait himself for whom also they believe they are protesting. In the farcical confusion of the illusion of the rights that they are fighting for, Donkin continues to urge them on to violence as he insists: "'Go for them … it's dark!'" (75). In the confusion that ensues, someone shouts, "Never been sick" (74) while another declares, "He's as fit as any ov us!" (75). Finally, Wait attests in a half-confession: "I am rather weak from lying-up so long" (75). Meanwhile, Donkin takes advantage of the chaos that has erupted and throws an iron belaying pin across the deck aiming at the captain, but missing. At this the crew hold themselves in check as shouts of reproof ring through: "Don't!" "Drop it!"—"We ain't that kind!" (76). Thus, the attempted brutal attack on the captain shocks the incensed crowd back to the conviction that they may be anything – gullible, impressionable – but murderous. With the slow return to sanity, Donkin is subdued and calm restored. After this second futile attempt to challenge the authority of the command, Donkin is shamed, called a "blackguard" (84) by the Captain, and mostly ignored by the rest of the crew. This reference to Donkin as a 'blackguard' recalls, as over and over again, his tainted filthy whiteness that causes him to fall short of being considered white. In his book *How the Irish Became White*, Noel Ignatiev suggests that in order to be "acknowledged as white", the Irish (who not altogether considered as white) made sure to "avoid the taint of blackness" by resorting to a racist exclusion of blacks from the initially black-held "menial" occupations, which they (Irish) were "willing to take" (Ignatiev 130). Thus, he demonstrates that in their economic scuffle to identify as white, the Irish were still equated to blacks because of their identification with what was considered "black man's work" (ibid 130). Besides, Eric Lott's study on the emergence and performance (through a blackface act) of Irish minstrelsy in 19th Century America demonstrates that poor, southern immigrant Irish were equated, "in both class and ethnic terms, to 'blackness'" (Lott 96). This manner of equating a tainted whiteness to blackness seems to be the concept at work in Donkin's portrayal throughout the

narrative as a poor and dirty white man. Based on this analysis, it is illuminating to note that Donkin and Wait are paired in an Othering, which, however different, is still related through the shared similarity of their signifying tropes. Thus, in being described as a 'blackguard' by the captain, Donkin is drawn parallel to Wait, in the suggestion of contemptible behaviour as well as in the notion of blackness indicated in the term. In an earlier instance in which such a suggestion of blackness is pinned to Wait, Donkin reviles him as being a "black-faced swine" (*Narcissus* 28). However, Donkin's own connection to this blackness, through the notions of filth and dirt, is inevitably suggested in Wait's reference to him as an "East-end trash" (*Narcissus* 28), a term loaded with the connotations of the filth and poverty of this London slum district, historically known to have been heavily populated by Irish immigrants. Therefore, even though Donkin hints quite early in the narrative that he is "an Englishman" (6), this 'East-end' reference to him associates him with the Irish, who have in the past been racially excluded from whiteness. In what may appear to be a subconscious contest to separately strip themselves of and map their Otherness onto each other, it is revealing that for the rest of the journey, Donkin sticks around Wait, mocking and reviling him to the point of death; and then stealing his money in his full glare just as he is dying. After Jimmy's death, Donkin now starts to sham sick and is given permission to "go lay-up" (*Narcissus* 97). When the ship finally docks and the crew line up for their payment, Donkin reappears very well dressed and mockingly arrogant and refuses his "discharge" claiming "I'm goin' ter 'ave a job ashore. […] No more bloomin' sea fur me" (*Narcissus* 105). In watching Wait die, and in fact, precipitating his demise, Donkin seems to have taken over the malevolence with which Wait was associated and he now becomes the embodiment of that malignant attitude. In response to the stony looks that he receives from the rest of the men, he ironically retorts, "Ye're the scum of the earth" (*Narcissus* 105). Through his words and by his refusal of his wage, he has putatively risen above the control of his superiors as well as the disdain of his former crew-mates. However, in their minds as well as in the readers' minds, he remains the "stinking, cadging liar" (*Narcissus* 92) that he has earlier been depicted as – the inferior Other.

Thus, it is evident that Donkin overtly pitches his strength against the command of the ship by inciting rebellion through his Mephistophelian wiles. In the case of Wait, however, the power play is even more subtle as he becomes the embodiment of the death that he incessantly talks about, playing on the effect that this ominous association has on the crew and how it allows him to control them. In the narrator's description of this sinister association, he states:

> Men stood around very still and with exasperated eyes. It was just what they had expected, and hated to hear, that idea of a stalking death, thrust at them many times a day like a boast and like a menace by this obnoxious nigger. He seemed to take a pride in that death which, so far, had attended only upon the ease of his life; he was overbearing about it, as if no one else in the world had ever been intimate with such a companion; he paraded it unceasingly before us with an affectionate persistence that made its presence indubitable, and at the same time incredible. No man could be suspected of such monstrous friendship! Was he a reality—or was he a sham—this ever-expected visitor of Jimmy's? We hesitated between pity and mistrust, while, on the slightest provocation, he shook before our eyes the bones of his bothersome and infamous skeleton. He was for ever trotting him out. He would talk of that coming death as though it had been already there, as if it had been walking the deck outside, as if it would presently come in to sleep in the only empty bunk; as if it had sat by his side at every meal. It interfered daily with our occupations, with our leisure, with our amusements. (*Narcissus* 22).

This account of the narrator describes one of the instances in which Wait berates his shipmates for talking too loudly "like a blooming lot of old women" (21) while he is trying to catch some sleep in his cabin. In his complaint against the men, Wait, as usual, reproaches them for not caring enough for "a dying man" (21). By indicating that this occurs 'many times a day', the narrator draws attention to Wait's habitual practice of reminding the men that he was waiting to die and, hence, of requiring them to comply with his demands, depriving them of their freewill and self-expression in the process. By depriving them of their freedom, Wait holds the men ransom for his imminent death, even while his persistent complaints against them causes them to become exasperated. This exasperation is expressed in the fact that even though they know that Wait will, as always, chide them with his approaching death, they 'hate' to hear about it as it is 'thrust' at them often 'like a boast and like a menace'. His persistence in manipulatively thrusting the idea of this death at the men animates it with the ability to 'stalk', so that it is further referred to as an 'ever-expected visitor' whom Wait could 'trot out' and who could be expected at any moment to be seen 'walking the deck', 'com[ing] in to sleep' or sitting beside Wait at meal times. Besides, the simultaneous comparison of 'that coming death' to a boast and a menace creates scepticism.

This is because while the idea of a boast connotes achievements, possessions or abilities, that of a menace connotes threat, danger or harm, making these notions paradoxical in nature. To the extent that this paradoxicality suggests a brooding presence which can however only be suspected because, due to its obvious absence, it cannot be substantiated, the men remain sceptical as to whether this death is 'a reality' or 'a sham'. However, from the narrator's depiction, we realise that Wait does not allow the crew even the freewill to be sceptical as in his 'affectionate persistence' to 'parade' his sinister 'companion' he would 'on the slightest provocation' shake before them 'the bones of his bothersome and infamous skeleton'. While the words 'bones' and 'skeleton' here undoubtedly refer to the emaciated body of Wait, their association with and evocation of death suggest that even though this death is not tangible, and is otherwise absent, it assumes an uncanny manifestation in Wait himself, thereby making 'its presence indubitable'. In thus parading death through embodying it, Wait instils a fear in the men which is also a fear of contagion and of their own death. For, in Wait, embodying and signifying the ominous Other, they perceive the threat of their own non-negotiable mortality which cannot be appeased through their identification as Self. Later in the narrative, this unspoken dread is verbalised by Donkin when he is approached by one of the men who repeats the received verdict regarding Wait stating, "Singleton says he will die" (26). To this, Donkin spitefully responds "And so will you" (26). It is this hint of a shared fate with the Other, this reminder of their own death displayed to them through Wait that, in the narrator's words, 'interfered daily with [their] occupations, with [their] leisure, with [their] amusements'. Through his imposition of this fear on the crew, Wait gains so much control over the men and even over the ship to the extent that the men would even attempt to refuse duty for his sake. The narrator states that when, on one occasion, they are asked to wash out the forecastle, they come "as near as possible to refusing duty" because "Jimmy objected to a wet floor" (*Narcissus* 28). In Schwarz's analysis of this effect that Wait has on the men, he asserts that "the crew's experience with Wait represents a confrontation with death. […] Thus their catatonic fear of death evoked by the presence of Wait displaces the captain as master" (Schwarz, 44). In a vivid confirmation of this fact, the narrator states that:

> [Wait] overshadowed the ship. Invulnerable in his promise of speedy corruption he trampled on our self-respect, he demonstrated to us daily our want of moral courage; he tainted our lives. Had we been a miserable gang of wretched immortals,

> unhallowed alike by hope and fear, he could not have lorded it over us with a more pitiless assertion of his sublime privilege. (*Narcissus* 29).

In their abiding allegiance to Wait and their submission to the power he wields over them, Belfast (another Irish reference), who dedicates himself to caring for Wait, even goes as far as to steal the officers' Sunday fruit pie from the galley "to tempt the fastidious appetite of Jimmy" (*Narcissus* 23). This causes a possible unsettling of the "mutual confidence" between the officers and the crew on the ship (*Narcissus* 23), but fails to impress or mollify Jimmy, as he persistently derides the men and exerts control over them. In a continuous tussle for control over the men, Singleton, the only crew member who remains unaffected by Jimmy's deception, at one point rebukes him, much to the delight of the crew:

> One day, […] at dinner […] Jimmy expressed his general disgust with men and things in words that were particularly disgusting. Singleton lifted his head. We became mute. The old man, addressing Jimmy, asked:—"Are you dying?" Thus interrogated, James Wait appeared horribly startled and confused. We all were startled. Mouths remained open; hearts thumped, eyes blinked; a dropped tin fork rattled in the dish; a man rose as if to go out, and stood still. In less than a minute Jimmy pulled himself together:—"Why? Can't you see I am?" he answered shakily. Singleton [declared] —"Well, get on with your dying," he said with venerable mildness; "don't raise a blamed fuss with us over that job. We can't help you." Jimmy fell back in his bunk, and for a long time lay very still wiping the perspiration off his chin. (*Narcissus* 26).

This confrontation temporarily breaks the spell of Wait's control over the men. The indication that after this exchange Wait falls back in his bunk, where he remains for a long time 'very still wiping the perspiration off his chin' gives the impression of another contest. Whereas his contest with Donkin signified an effort between like natures to outwit each other in their identification of Otherness, this contest with Singleton assumes a mysterious quality which leaves Wait baffled and trounced. This is because it subtly represents a match between two opposing forces in which Singleton, consistently depicted as impassive, remaining duty-bound, and unaffected by Wait's schemes, signifies the force of good against Wait, whose tainting influence and devilish portrayal,

signifies the force of evil. Notably, this contest, almost imperceptible in the context of this exchange, recurs in a more significant form later in the narrative as Wait clearly draws close to his death. After Captain Allistoun curbs Wait's influence by exposing his subterfuge and confining him to his bunk, Wait's control over the crew begins to wane, making him simply the object of their sympathetic visits and warm interest, and the permanent subject of their discussions. He, however, continues to display a "superb impudence" (87) with which he scolds his shipmates for being cowardly in not standing up for him against the captain. At this point, even though the men know better, they indulge him just so they can "keep him alive till home—to the end of the voyage" (87). However, while everyone tries to cheer Wait in the hope of preserving him, the reader learns that:

> Singleton as usual held aloof, appearing to scorn the insignificant events of an ended life. Once only he came along, and unexpectedly stopped in the doorway. He peered at Jimmy in profound silence, as if desirous to add that black image to the crowd of Shades that peopled his old memory. We kept very quiet, and for a long time Singleton stood there as though he had come by appointment to call for some one, or to see some important event. James Wait lay perfectly still, and apparently not aware of the gaze scrutinising him with a steadiness full of expectation. There was a sense of a contest in the air. We felt the inward strain of men watching a wrestling bout. At last Jimmy with perceptible apprehension turned his head on the pillow.—"Good evening," he said in a conciliating tone.—"H'm," answered the old seaman, grumpily. For a moment longer he looked at Jimmy with severe fixity, then suddenly went away. It was a long time before any one spoke in the little cabin, though we all breathed more freely as men do after an escape from some dangerous situation. (*Narcissus* 87).

Set in the mood of a subliminal confrontation, this encounter between Singleton and Wait is rightly described as bearing the 'sense of a contest'. From the narrator's account of it, we realise that the struggle between the two is so intense and the atmosphere so charged that the rest of the crew, unwittingly caught as spectators, feel 'the inward strain of men watching a wrestling bout'. From the indication that prior to this unexpected stop at the door of Wait's cabin, Singleton 'held aloof' in 'scorn', it is evident that the tension that characterises this contest was already simmering only

to climax at the point of the subconscious impact of Singleton's 'scrutinising gaze' upon Wait. The intensity of this impact is captured through the use of terms such as 'peer' to refer to Singleton's gaze; and 'profound silence' and 'steadiness' to indicate the resolute and deliberate manner in which he carries out this action. Besides, the stunning effect it has on the onlookers who remain 'very quiet' and on Wait who remains 'perfectly still' is further proof of the high-strung impact of Singleton's confrontation. We know it to be confrontational and not just observational from the impression we get that Wait, in a display of the cowardice he has just accused his shipmates of, tries to avoid facing up to Singleton. This impression is given to the reader when the narrator first states that Wait is 'apparently not aware' of Singleton's gaze, but then later reveals that 'at last' he turns his head 'with perceptible apprehension'. From this, it appears that, in his deceptive nature, he only pretends not to be aware of Singleton's challenge only for him to finally meet the challenge with obvious anxiety. From this expression of anxiety, the reader may interpret Wait's effort to placate Singleton by greeting him 'in a conciliating tone' as a sign of defeat, whereas it becomes evident from Singleton's refusal to be mollified and his persistent austere nature that he has subdued his opponent at last. As Singleton leaves the scene, the suspense that hung over the whole crew is lifted and a sense of relief slowly falls upon the men who can now breathe 'more freely as men do after an escape from some dangerous situation'. That the release of tension should be described as a relief experienced due to the escape from danger, is quite significant. This is because as part of the account of this contest between Singleton and Wait, the narrator explains that everyone knew Singleton's ideas about Wait which could notably be summed up in the theory that "Jimmy was the cause for head winds" as "[m]ortally sick men… linger till the first sight of land, and then die; and Jimmy knew that the very first land would draw his life from him" (87). Being the oldest seaman among the crew and grounding his hypothesis on the claim to his long experience at sea with an emphatic, "It is so on every ship" (87), Singleton's notion harbours the suggestion that, to keep from dying, Wait, in a deliberate force of will, holds a supernatural sway over the ship and even over the natural elements surrounding the ship so as to prevent the Narcissus from coming in sight of land. Even though the rest of the crew are hesitant to fully admit Singleton's claims, they are also unable to dispute them based on the evidence of extremely bad and capricious weather they keep experiencing and also on the fact that, despite their diligent efforts, the ship keeps tossing about aimlessly "distracted, like a timid creature at the foot of a wall" (88). Following from the idea of Singleton's theory and from the actual experience

of the Narcissus at sea, this metaphor that casts the ship as a timid creature, also implies Wait as the wall that prevents the ship from moving in the desired direction. Once again, in a pun on his name, Wait seems to be able to make even the ship and the natural elements wait on him, while he tries to hold on to life. Thus, to extend the metaphor, we may interpret Singleton's silent contest with Wait as a breaking down of that wall in order to make way for the ship. Additionally, the relief felt by the men may be read as a relief experienced from escaping the 'dangerous situation' of risking being crushed by the falling wall. Meanwhile, these men continue to pay sympathetic visits to Wait while longing "for a sign of hope, for a sign of fair wind" (88) to sail them home and in their vain expectation it seems as though the "universe [has] conspired with James Wait" (88). The final element that breaks Wait's spell by causing his death is Donkin, who, desperate to steal Wait's money, taunts him to death by "the venom of his thoughts" and "his hate" (88). Thus, if Wait's contest with Singleton marked a disempowering encounter in which Wait's supernatural hold over the ship is broken, then, the role that Donkin plays in his eventual death can once again be marked as that of a catalyst that precipitates his demise.

In a remarkable twist of events, when Wait dies, the weather does indeed clear up, granting the ship safe passage for the rest of the journey, and a swift sail home. Thus, the portrayal of Wait's life and death as having some supernatural significance in the narrative cannot be ignored. So profoundly is this notion incorporated and romanticised in the text that it is not left to implication but is explicitly suggested by the narrator. As Wait nears his death, the narrator observes:

> He was so utterly wrong about himself that one could not but suspect him of having access to some source of supernatural knowledge. He was absurd to the point of inspiration. He was unique, and as fascinating as only something inhuman could be; he seemed to shout his denials already from beyond the awful border. He was becoming immaterial like an apparition; his cheekbones rose, the forehead slanted more; the face was all hollows, patches of shade; and the fleshless head resembled a disinterred black skull, fitted with two restless globes of silver in the sockets of eyes. He was demoralising. (*Narcissus* 85).

In this depiction of Wait at the verge of death, he is represented as not even belonging any longer to the race of humans: he is Other-than-human. In fact, so obvious is his Otherness beyond the

human that it causes the narrator to state that he was 'unique, and as fascinating as only something inhuman could be'. In this uniqueness that evokes the inhuman, he is imagined as having already transcended the sphere of the living through the notion of him as being already 'beyond the awful border'. This being 'beyond' suggests a crossing of boundaries, a transgressivity, that produces a duality in his existence: of being simultaneously present in two otherwise opposite spheres. While he obstinately holds on to 'his denials' regarding his imminent death, his present appearance signifies the inexorable reality indicated in the evidence of him 'becoming immaterial like an apparition'. Since the notion of an apparition implies a presence ominously marked by an antecedent absence signalled by death, the description of Wait through such a comparison already draws on the prognostication of his absence through death to exclude him from a corporeal presence which is gradually disembodied into immaterial form. This disembodiment extends the symbolic representation of the character as Other-than-human beyond the immateriality of an apparition as the description of Wait escalates into gothic proportions. The portrayal of his face as 'all hollows' and 'patches of shade', and the depiction of his 'fleshless head' as resembling 'a disinterred black skull, fitted with two restless globes of silver in the sockets of eyes', create an effect that is not only 'demoralising' for his shipmates, but that also instils in them a sense of apprehensiveness about Wait's death, causing them, in the face of his obstinacy, to 'suspect him of having access to some source of supernatural knowledge'

In the end, even while Wait yet refuses to accept the fact of its approach, he helplessly succumbs to the death that he had much earlier and all along exulted in. The battle of wills that breaks his supernatural hold over the ship also seems to have culminated in a loss of control over his own life, resulting for him in a double loss: the inability to assert any more control over the ship, and the loss of his life. For all his denial, it is only at the very last moment that he is shocked to the reality of his fate by Donkin who reviles him with his approaching death, stating that once he dies he will be tossed into the ocean, "Feet fust, through a port … Splash! Never see yer any more. Overboard!" (94). At this, and as he starts to feel worse, he sobs "with an incredibly strong and heart-breaking voice…: 'Overboard! … I! … My God!'" (95). In this mixed expression of dread, sorrow and disbelief, Wait finally evokes the sympathy, albeit deferred, of the reader. This effect of Wait's death is projected onto us through the narrator, whose use of the term 'heart-breaking' insinuates a rather delayed empathy for Wait. While in his use of this term the narrator identifies with the fallible humanity of the character, who elevated himself above his shipmates in

his narcissistic nature, the reader cannot help but also notice that the narrator's sentimentalism is expressed at this latter part of the narrative when the character has already been established as the dreaded Other whose symbolic exclusion through separation and confinement guarantees the preservation of the Self.

CHAPTER TWO

SI(GH)TING THE OTHER: SPACE AND TIME IN *LORD JIM*

Conrad's novel *Lord Jim* is arguably the most complex of all his writing. Divided into two parts, it explores the meaning and the motives behind the actions of both the main character, Jim, and the narrator, Marlow. In its enquiry of intention, it problematises the notion of what it means "to be" as well as what it means to be a "gentleman" in the strange, and perhaps alien, circumstances in which Jim finds himself (Sewlall 147).

In this chapter I examine the notion of alterity in Conrad's *Lord Jim* from the perspective of how space and time contribute to the construction of alterity. For this analysis, I focus on Jim, the eponymous character, as the Other. My argument evolves from the premise that right from the onset of the narrative Conrad, through Marlow, postures Jim as an Other; and that, throughout the rest of the story, his narration of events and how these correspond in time and place to other events, and also his description of places all culminate to validate Jim's alterity. Conrad achieves this by parading Jim as an exhibit under the critical gaze of his listeners/ readers, and situating him spatially and temporally in a liminal site between reality and imagination. Drawing substantially on Edward Soja's concept of Thirdspace (1996) and also on Homi Bhabha's (1994) conceptualisation of hybridity and the third space in postcolonial discourse, I propose that Jim can most fruitfully be discussed in terms of a "third-as-other" from three main perspectives: that of seeing, through which I will explore the moment he is seen, the way he is seen and his way of seeing others; that of contact, by which I mean his encounter with and avoidance of others; and that of location which allows me to examine the various settings in which he is placed, and also to focus on his erratic self-imposed banishment away from a certain imagined centre. Accordingly, I will stage my argument under three sub-headings, namely 'Thirdsight and the Other,' 'Othering Encounters,' and 'Mapping the Other.'

In my first section, 'Thirdsight and the Other,' I coin the term 'thirdsight' to probe the connections between visualisation and thirding-as-othering. Thirdsight refers to a way of seeing things in both real and imagined ways which impact on our judgment of situations and people. In formulating this concept, I am drawing on the notion of the 'third' in thirdspace as "the […] most important step in transforming the categorical and closed logic of either/ or to the dialectically

open logic of both/and also…" (Soja, 60). Thus, I will explore 'thirdsight' as the visual instances, and possibilities of real and imagined events in the narrative that contribute to Jim's Othering.

In my second section, 'Othering Encounters,' I look at various encounters related to Jim which consolidate his characterisation as an Other. Here, I examine Jim's own encounter with other people like Marlow and his fellow crew officers on the Patna; but I also examine encounters between other people (like that between Marlow and Stein), all of which invariably expose Jim as an Other. I equally explore Jim's avoidance of contact with others as a consequence of his Otherness.

In the third section of this chapter, subtitled 'Mapping the Other,' I map out Jim's spatial and temporal locations, discussing how these settings serve to portray him as an Other. I also explore connections between Jim and other characters, such as George, his shipmate on the Patna, and Cornelius, his commercial rival in Patusan, showing how their spatiotemporal situations reflect on Jim and suggest his Otherness. Additionally, Jim's exile and flight from himself and from others is explored in this section.

Jim's story, as narrated by Marlow, is structurally divided into two main parts and it is possible to discern a certain amount of theatricality in each as both parts present us with a dramatic staging of events. The major events in the first part revolve around the botched journey of the Patna, the ship on which Jim assumes his first command as chief mate and which he and his other shipmates abandon on the suspicion of a possible imminent wreckage, leaving about eight hundred pilgrims on board to an ominous fate. The second part centres on events that take place in Patusan, the fictional Asian region to which Jim retreats in self-imposed exile, where his ideas about himself take firmer shape, and where also he dies.

THIRDSIGHT AND THE OTHER

To begin my discussion in this section, I demonstrate how Marlow's encounter with Jim constitutes an Othering experience by equating Othering to thirding through the narrator's sustained indication that Jim consistently occupies an in-between category that impacts on his identity. Thus, in addition to my reliance on Soja for the exploration of the concept of thirding in relation to this novel, I also draw on Homi Bhabha's (1994) notions of hybridity and third space to examine the

consolidation of Jim as an Other. More specifically, I read Marlow's narration of the events surrounding Jim from the vantage point of Soja's argument that "[t]hirding recomposes the dialectic through an intrusive disruption that explicitly spatializes dialectical reasoning" (Soja, 1996: 85). From this perspective I argue that, through his tenacious 'thirding' representation of Jim, Marlow persistently transforms the concrete facts of his narrative into abstract notions through which his listeners/ -readers might evaluate Jim. Besides, his uncompromising decision to depict Jim as an Other right from the start, imposes on the reader the fixed assumption of Jim's Otherness which only increases in form as he is transformed from corporeal human subject to evanescent phantasmic matter. This Othering of Jim depicts him as constantly located within a liminal space between reality and imagination which produces in him a fluidity of identity marked by an ambivalent subjectivity. This ambivalent subjectivity, resulting from Jim's projection of his imaginary world onto the real, can be more fully understood when examined from the perspective of Bhabha's analysis of Levinas's notion of reality in parentheses. According to Bhabha, such a parenthetical perspective "effects an 'externality of the inward'" which marks "the very enunciative position of the historical and narrative subject" who introduces "'into the heart of subjectivity a radical and anarchical reference to the other which in fact constitutes the inwardness of the subject'" (22). In this assertion, Bhabha indicates the possibility of the subject developing an ambivalent identity as a result of being influenced and inevitably controlled by a suppressed and internalised Other. Evidently, in Conrad's novel, Jim's efforts at negotiating an identity (which, as informed by his imagination, can be nothing short of heroic) is impacted strongly by such an inwardness. This results in the fact that he is constantly positioned in a third space created through the projected externality of his fantasised world, which he imagines to be able to control, and to which he invariably escapes only to find it as penetrable, as elusive, and as defiant of control as the 'real' world from which he is fleeing. At first, this third space is depicted as a psychological construct of his imagination. But as the narrative unfolds, it progressively manifests as physical sites, and then eventually combines the imaginary and the physical to converge into the Utopian world of Patusan. It is in the initial psychological site of a third space that Marlow first encounters Jim; and, as this relationship develops, Marlow's own experiences with and suggestions of Jim's other 'third sites' provide the frame from which he evaluates his own as well as Jim's actions, and tries to make his listeners/-readers do so too.

Marlow's first encounter with Jim seems to have come about as the result of what he describes as a fated encounter since it appears that he "was doomed to be the recipient of confidences, and to be confronted with unanswerable questions" (*LJ* 197). Suggestive in this description of himself is the idea that he becomes privy to the psychological conflicts of people who confide in him. In his own assessment of this role that he plays as the listener of confessions, he discerns that by some malicious manoeuvring the devil "lets [him] in for that kind of thing" (*LJ* 21):

> the kind of thing that by devious, unexpected, truly diabolical ways causes me to run up against men with soft spots, with hard spots, with hidden plague spots, by Jove! And loosens their tongues at the sight of me for their infernal confidences. […] And what I have done to be thus favoured I want to know. (*LJ* 21).

In light of this role as "a receptacle of confessions" of doomed men, Marlow's own confidences to his listeners and to us, Conrad's readers, are called into question, for his narration implies the betrayal of the trust placed in him, thus giving one a suspicion that his rather subjective perspective may not be entirely trustworthy due to his readiness to disclose the confessions shared with him. In this regard, the conscientious reader cannot help but wonder about Marlow's own 'soft spots', 'hard spots' or 'hidden plague spots' that, at the sight of eager listeners, render his own tongue loose about the 'infernal confidences' of other men. In effect, even though we have little choice but to rely heavily on Marlow's narrative perspective and the portrayal of characters that that perspective offers, the subtle hint of his unreliability also prompts us to assess his narrative from the possibility of other perspectives, which may still be nonetheless inevitably tainted by what J. H. Stape refers to as Marlow's "highly individualized" frame narrative (Stape 67). In an elaborate analysis of the function of the frame narrative in Conrad's text, Stape makes the elegant observation that this technique "supports the formal elegiac romance, the recollection and judgement in retrospect of one man by another" (68). He demonstrates how this is achieved through the "the counterpointing of the voices of innocence and experience" (69) represented in the "*senex-puer* (old man/ young man) relationship […] with its opposition of youthful ardour and sagacious distance" (69). In relation to this, I posit that this opposition of youth and sagacity, innocence and experience is not only depicted through the relationship between Marlow and Jim, but also through the subtle distinctions between the older and the younger Marlow as between the

earlier and the later Jim, distantiated through time. Drawing further on the notion of Marlow's story as a frame narrative, I point out that, through this narrative technique, we are presented with the surface story of Jim in search of himself (specifically his fictional heroic self). But we also detect the subtle subtext of Marlow's own confrontation with his Other in an encounter that shakes the core of his belief system as it dramatizes what Stape refers to as "the contrast between a man from the ranks with his fixed standard of conduct and the man whose 'soft spot' […] unfixes such an ardent belief" (69). While the use of this technique of framing might provide a narrative distance that helps to make Marlow's story about Jim more plausible, it also betrays Marlow as unreliable because although his narrative is ostensibly about Jim, it is primarily self-serving as he uses it as a means by which he comes to terms with the illusions of his own standards and beliefs. The evidence that Marlow's telling is indeed self-referential and aimed at an assessment of his own identity and values exists in the fact that, in the narrative, he is present in two distinct forms. There is, first, the younger Marlow, who experienced the events being recounted, had interacted personally with Jim, and was even instrumental in Jim's withdrawal from active seafaring as it was he who persistently offered him meaningful alternatives to a life of service at sea. Then, there is the older Marlow, the narrator, who tells this story in retrospect, appealing to our sense of judgement and drawing on the retrospection of his encounter with his Other to assure himself of his own identity. But his very appeal to our sense of judgement, however, indirectly invites us to subject him, the narrator, to critical scrutiny and, perhaps, to see him as a betrayer of the confidence placed in him by Jim. As a result, we become wary of fully giving him our own confidences; and we are drawn to assess his own motives in relation to his presentation and evaluation of Jim's actions and motives as we transpose his narrative of self-assertion and self-identification onto that of Jim's search for self. In effect, the frame narrative technique, contributing to rendering us more critical in our assessment of Marlow's narrative, makes us remain ambivalent in our reception of his story. This is because it simultaneously implicates him in, while it also salvages him from the suspicion of total untrustworthiness because his retrospective retelling temporally juxtaposes his earlier judgement of the actual events against his later meticulous assessment of his own actions as of Jim's on the basis of a presumed social code of ethics and seemly practice.

Such a code of ethics, indicating an accepted standard, is invariably what Jim aims to conform to, and which he so pathetically falls just short of every time. In the novel, Conrad ingeniously captures this notion of falling short of a standard in the metaphor of a jump, which,

always miscalculated, is taken at the wrong time, or is not taken at all when it must be, or is altogether botched. The first instance of such a shortfall is depicted right at the beginning of the narrative when, on a training ship at sea, Jim fails to respond quickly enough to an emergency. As Jakob Lothe observes, this incident proleptically indicates "his major weaknesses" later in the narrative (Lothe 171), and Marlow projects these weaknesses as strong indicators of Jim's Otherness. By projecting Jim as the 'weak' Other who falls short of the standard, Marlow assumes the stance that he and his listeners unanimously accept, approve and even represent such a set of standards. In fact, he explicitly states that much when, in trying to justify his curiosity to find out more about the shameful Patna affair, he hints that he is driven by the simple fact of being "a member of an obscure body of men held together by a community of inglorious toil and by fidelity to a certain standard of conduct" (31). With this justification on the grounds of upholding a certain general code of ethics, Marlow's listeners/ -readers are coerced into identifying with his ethical stance and they become invariably a part of his imagined community constructed on and bound by a 'standard of conduct'. When his identification of himself as a seaman bearing the responsibility of upholding the "honour of the craft" (28) drives him to witness the court case concerning the Patna at which he first observes (and then later meets) Jim, it is his persistent assumption of their common fraternity bound by a mutual charter, albeit unspoken but understood, that prompts Marlow to consistently refer to Jim as "one of us" (2). Although this refrain is not unique to Lord Jim, it is more frequently intoned, and more doubtfully so, in this narrative than in other novels such as *An Outcast of the Islands* or *The Nigger of the Narcissus* both of which share the theme of the consequences of egotistically elevating oneself above others. In fact, whereas, in these other texts, the use of the phrase largely adduces a sense of belonging, in *Lord Jim* it more profoundly denotes an ideal of standards, an ethics of conduct expected of "all akin with the brotherhood of the sea" (*The Nigger of the Narcissus*, 45). According to Rachel Hollander, however, this "foundation is challenged […] especially by encounters with the […] other, [hence] the ideal provides a starting place for evaluating the ethical and political dilemmas of [the novel]" (Hollander 2). Corroborating Hollander's argument that the moral ideal is undermined by encounters with alterity, I assert that it is through such an encounter with his Other that Marlow is led to doubt "the sovereign power enthroned in a fixed standard of conduct" (31). It is also through such an encounter that he constantly questions his own actions, albeit inexplicable even to himself,

which result from his assumption of responsibility for saving Jim from his moral failings or helping him to overcome them (*LJ* 106; 111).

Thus, in this text, as in most of his other fictional works, Conrad's construction of a universe anchored on a collective belief of what constitutes a moral code for life is systematically undercut by growing doubt. In *Lord Jim*, this philosophical discourse on the assumption of an incontrovertible universal morality binding humanity is conducted on two levels, viz land and sea. While the notion of land in contrast to that of sea would imply a sense of concreteness or certitude, as opposed to the sense of abstraction, fluidity and uncertainty that the sea connotes, Jim's travails, on land as at sea, reveal the precariousness of constructing an identity on conventional philosophical ideals. Conrad's subtle conflation of these levels of concreteness and abstraction, by demonstrating that Jim's experiences on both land and sea culminate in a pursuit of illusion, reveals that on a deep level of analysis one would realise that conventional philosophical idealism, marking a universal human need to uphold morality, is itself a form of "idyllic imagination" – a disillusion. In relation to this, George Panichas suggests that Jim is a slave to such an imagination and that as his identity evolves he "comes to discern not only the pitfalls of this imagination but also the need to free himself from its bondage" (Panichas 15). While I agree with Panichas' proposition of Jim's enslavement to his illusions, I, however, contend that he is hardly aware that his pitfalls are the result of these illusions nor does he realise the importance of distinguishing between reality and imagination. In fact, quite contrary to the claim that he "comes to discern" his condition, Jim, as the plot develops, progressively withdraws from reality to live out a purely utopic existence that merges with his idealistic self. Thus, when this dream-like existence is disrupted by the intrusion of the pirate Gentleman Brown, a series of conflicts leading to Jim's death is set in motion. In the end, the final shot that marks his death may be seen as an implosion through which Jim is permanently sucked into his imagination that remains an "inscrutable […] and excessively romantic" (253) existence governed by some fantastic "ideal of conduct" (253).

Following from Marlow's narrative, it is revealed that much of Jim's failure can be summed up as cowardice, and the lack of courage or quick-wittedness to act under pressure or in the face of calamity. This moral weakness constitutes a serious flaw for "men of his calling" (*LJ* 8). Jim, however, fails to admit this either to Marlow or even to himself. Yet, the fact of his shortcomings depicts Jim as "an Everyman in the sense that what happens to him could happen to

anyone, including [even] Marlow" (Rueben Sanchez 68). This view is primarily based on the argument that Marlow's reflections lead him to conclude that "there are two sides to man – a side visible to others in society, and a darker, submerged side, to which no one else […] will admit" (Sanchez 9). While Sanchez sees this as an evocation of "the dichotomy between good and evil within man" (9), his argument begs the question of whether Jim's lack is indeed proof of a darker, evil side that is opposed to a good, ideal character or whether it simply proves that Everyman exists both as a Self and as an Other, as an ego and an alter-ego, where the former simultaneously strives to make the latter achieve the ego-ideal even while it attempts to suppress the alter-ego, attributing to it any shortcomings of the ego. In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said describes this mechanism on the larger scale of Europe's relation to its Oriental Other when he states that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 3). However, in this dichotomous existence between the Self and its Other, there is an undeniable third space that subverts the binary relationship between the two, thus undoing the formalist notion of the double bind of a two-part term through the claim to a third. In Said's assertion, such a thirdness is to an extent acknowledged. For the terms "surrogate" and "underground" imply that the West projects features of its own culture that it deems inadmissible or inferior onto a Western Other. Thus, already in Said, the Other is at least partly a projection of the Self. As a result of this claim to a third part within the link, the Other is never necessarily the opposite of the Self, nor is the Self ultimately superior to the Other; but the two are constantly contesting, questioning, evaluating each other while intermediating through the third, in a never-ending process of becoming. According to Bhabha, this third is the hybrid that:

> displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of […] power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the […] hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. (112).

Thus, from Bhabha's notion of the third as a hybrid as noted above, we are able to infer the emancipatory potential of this hybrid thirdspace from its 'deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination.' In deforming and displacing such sites, the third achieves two things. First, through its action of wedging a thirdspace within the binary polarity of either-or, it effects a deconstruction, or better still a dismantling of an established binary system in which one term is the lesser and inferior of the other. Thus, it overturns the inveterate expediency to ranking that results from binarism. Second, upon its insertion within that in-between space wherein it produces the hybrid, the third causes a shifting of the dynamics of reactive force from the production of a one-way effect emanating from a superior unto a subordinate agent, thereby resulting in the reciprocity of such reactivity triangulated through the existence of that third. Thus, the third constitutes that 'ambivalent space' where, in an extension of Bhabha's mixed metaphor, it not only constitutes a negative transparency but also becomes the site of reflection from which the subject/object simultaneously identifies itself and reflects upon itself. In effect, the Self is at once Other and the Other, Self as through the hybrid it becomes equally possible for a rite of desire to be enacted on a site of power, capturing its objects in an antithetical multiplicity in which they are neither one thing nor the other, at once claiming and repudiating the right to belong to any group or place.

It is in such an ambivalent and hybrid third space that Jim is located; and from which he persistently subverts Marlow's inclusion of him among seamen who honoured the "solidarity of the craft" (80). It is also from this third space that, during the court trial to judge his actions and invariably determine his fitness as a seaman, Jim's rite of desire for heroism is enacted on Captain Brierly whose lofty self-regard and disdain for all others epitomises him as the site of power for the determination and preservation of what he calls "professional decency" (42). As one of two nautical assessors leading the inquiry into the "criminal weakness" (26) displayed by Jim's abandonment, along with his other shipmates, of an ostensibly sinking ship and its passengers, Brierly is confronted at once with Jim's courage to submit himself to the inquiry and with his cowardice which forms the substance of the inquiry. This confrontation arouses within Brierly a personal conflict between what he considers courageous and what for him constitutes cowardice. While, in conversation with Marlow, he questions these attributes as they are revealed to him through Jim, Brierly is also unable to come to terms with any claim to courage made on the strength of Jim's readiness to face trial for his ineptitude.

This psychological conflict to distinguish between courage and cowardice points to the fact that thirdness also marks a moral category between the binary terms that undercuts the possibility of neatly defining Jim's failure. Jim alludes to this ambivalence himself when in his confession to Marlow he intimates that, faced with the challenge to quickly decide what to do at the critical point of the Patna crisis, he was "not sure" and felt "so lost" (79). In that indecisive state of uncertainty, he simply follows the actions of his fellow crew members who, acting on their conviction that the ship will sink, decide to jump out and save themselves. In his introspective disclosure to Marlow, Jim asserts that the belief that fuelled their decision to abandon the ship "was something like the wretched story they made up" later to explain their action (79). He, however, makes the retrospective observation that their action can hardly be justified as the idea that motivated it "was not a lie—but it wasn't truth all the same" (79). In this observation, the ambivalence of that notion that is neither a lie nor the truth is further emphasised by the clash of morality that it draws attention to as Jim declares: "There was not the thickness of a sheet of paper between the right and the wrong of this affair" (79).

In the narrative, such a conflict of morality forms a key thematic element that is explored from diverse perspectives, including the authoritative view of Brierly, the initially self-assured and later disconcerted view of Marlow, and even the philosophical and anthropological views of Marlow's friend Stein, and of the French Lieutenant who happened to be on a French gunboat that later rescued the abandoned Patna. Plagued with this thematic concern in their discussion about Jim's trial, Marlow suggests to Brierly that "[t]here is a kind of courage in [Jim] facing it out as he does, knowing very well that if he went away nobody would trouble to run after him" (41). To this, Brierly contemptuously responds: "Courage be hanged! […] That sort of courage is of no use to keep a man straight, and I don't care a snap for such courage. If you were to say it was a kind of cowardice now – of softness" (41). This exchange dramatizes the difficulty of describing what Jim's attitude represents exactly, and while Brierly remains adamant to accept the suggestion that it is in any way courageous, his use of the word 'softness' mollifies his initial entrenched notion that it is a display of cowardice. Plagued by such an inability to categorically place Jim, when Marlow counters that, in relation to the trial, the cowardice of Jim and his shipmates "did not seem to him a matter of such great importance," Brierly retorts: "And you call yourself a seaman, I suppose" (41). In this rebuttal of Marlow's opinion, Brierly returns to his hard-line notions that leave no room for subtleties and thematically ties the responsibility of evaluating cowardice as

ethically abhorrent to the worth of their profession. He also implies that such moral judgement is the standard for determining good seamanship or maintaining the 'professional decency' of the trade. In line with this notion, he instinctively executes judgement not only over Jim but also over the whole community of seamen as he declares: "The worst of it […] is that all you fellows have no sense of dignity; you don't think enough of what you are supposed to be" (42). That this moral dispute between Marlow and Brierly should be presented in the sequence of the narrative right after Marlow's visit to the hospitalised engineer of the Patna whose moral deficiency seems to have reduced him to madness is significant. This is because it thematically adumbrates Conrad's embedded existential concern expressed through Stein's evocation of Shakespeare's Hamlet: "That is the question […] How to be! Ach! How to be!" (129). Additionally, the occurrence of this debate within a temporal parallel to Jim's trial again adumbrates the character's ontological crisis which results in his constant effort to strive towards that idea, expressed by Brierly, of 'what [he] is supposed to be'. Lastly, that this debate on morality should occur shortly before Brierly's act of suicide (committed soon after Jim's trial), portends the danger of holding on to rigid moral standards that leave little room for human error. Analysing this stylistic mechanism of juxtaposing such scenes that emphasise moral concerns, Ian Watt indicates that:

> [it] calls upon us to mediate between two antithetical moral analogies: the engineer [who] has shown that the most unscrupulous reprobate may not be able to stand up to the unconscious idea of his guilt; [and] Brierly [who] has shown that the most beribboned pillar of society may not be able to stand up to the shameful idea of his fear. (Watt 280-281).

Referring to this technique as a case of thematic apposition, Watt observes that these two characters represent two extremes of morality that thematically frame the narrative: moral depravity depicted by the engineer, and moral conceit depicted by Brierly. To extend Watt's argument, I assert that the thematic association between the deranged engineer and Brierly's suicide proleptically signal the eventual ominous outcome of Jim's tendency to dwell on what, in his own imagination and according to societal expectation, he is *supposed* to be. The fatal demise of both the engineer and Brierly demonstrate the result of thoroughly embracing either extremity of morality. Yet, the fact that Jim occupies an indeterminate moral thirdspace does not absolve him from a similar fate, for it is much less the ethical stance itself than the sell-out of ethical reason to live up to rigid social

and personal standards that culminate in self-destruction. Therefore, when Jim, in his egoistic ambition to achieve his fictionalised heroic standards of honour, once again 'jumps ship', deserting those who depend on him by giving himself up to be killed in Patusan, he suffers the same fate as the engineer and Brierly – that is death through moral suicide in the one instance and physical suicide in the other. The difference with Jim's death is that it is his desire to make atonement for his moral failure, to live up to a certain standard of morality, and his inadvertent failure to sustain his moral fantasies, (when he thinks he has finally achieved them in Patusan), that results in his suicide which takes the form of him voluntarily surrendering himself to be killed by Doramin.

OTHERING ENCOUNTERS

Just as in the case of the engineer and that of Brierly, the excessive dearth or demonstration of morality is largely self-serving, it becomes evident also that Jim's moral thirdness is primarily egocentric. In this regard, Marlow observes that when Jim jumps from the sinking *Patna* leaving the eight hundred pilgrims on board to a perilous fate, what his action actually displays is a "breach of faith with the community of mankind" (95). In effect, he, like the two moral extremists, becomes morally ostracised from humanity. Thus, Marlow's efforts to help him are aimed at saving him from such ostracism, and his narrative demonstrates a sustained effort to assert Jim's affinity with humanity rather than with valour. Jim, however, persistently strives for honour over social integration. Or, more precisely, he deems the achievement of honour as the key to obtaining social integration by becoming respected and thereby accepted. His achievements and esteem in Patusan testify to such a philosophy. So, at the beginning of the narrative, Jim's jump from the *Patna*, appears to be an unconscious bid to save himself so he may yet have the opportunity, which he had not yet had, to live up to his heroic ideal. However, when, in the end, he gives himself up to be killed by Doramin, this act appears to be the crowning touch that seals his accomplishments in Patusan, marking also the end of the peace and order he had established there. Besides, as he has already been referenced in several instances throughout the narrative as bearing a certain aspect of liminal thirdness, in his demise he gains in this liminality by embodying the spectral Otherness of his imagined self.

In effect, Jim's failure to determinately fit into a neat moral categorisation is unhinging at all levels of social integration, both for him personally as well as for people who come into contact

with him. On a personal level this ambivalence makes him unable to identify with others. For, as I will discuss later, his heroic fantasies, often make him rate himself above others despite his impetuous nature. This invariably accentuates his liminality within the social spaces he finds himself in, resulting in the ambivalence of being neither fully included in nor completely excluded from such spaces. Besides, as the narrative reveals, his contact with others often plunges those others into ethical battles with themselves resulting in uncertainties about their long-held convictions. It is in this manner that he destabilises Brierly who, from his position of judgement and his pompous concern to uphold professional decency, sees Jim's failure as "a disgrace" (42) that affects every one of them, including, and perhaps especially, himself. This is confirmed by Marlow's retrospective summation of his interaction with him when he states that "at bottom poor Brierly must have been thinking of himself" (41). For in his declaration that he had been "caught" for the inquiry (40) which he considered "the stupidest set-out you can imagine" (41), he states that, during the hearing, he felt "like a fool all the time" (41), and that "[s]uch an affair destroys one's confidence" (42). By such an intimation, Brierly, in actual fact, declares his shame to be in any way involved in or tinged by Jim's affair. In his narration, Marlow observes that after this exchange with Brierly he becomes convinced that "the inquiry was a severe punishment to that Jim, and that his facing it – practically of his own free will – was a redeeming feature in his abominable case" (42). What he leaves unsaid, however, is the suggestion that this enactment of Jim's redemption in the very face of Brierly's condemnation of him results in an inversion in which Brierly, the self-righteous judge carries out upon himself the sentence that he passes on Jim, the abominable moral criminal. So, for Brierly, the inquiry is a severe embarrassment and his forced involvement in it becomes a condemning feature (contrasting with Jim's 'redeeming feature') for his cocksure attitude as it tinges and destroys his self-assuredly successfully built career. Having suggested that Marlow advise Jim to abscond and avoid the trial; and learning from Marlow that Jim may not have the financial means to do so, he retorts: "Well, then, let him creep twenty feet underground and stay there! By heavens! *I* would! (41). One obvious interpretation of Brierly's statement would be: 'If I were Jim, I would hide my face in shame!'. And that is what he proposes that Jim does. However, a focus on the 'underground' metaphor that he employs makes this pronouncement sound like a sort of death sentence because of the imagery of burial that it evokes. Besides, the occurrence of the term 'underground' here links to my earlier evocation of Said's use of the term where it bears decidedly psychoanalytic overtones of a surrogate, perhaps

imperceptible self, an Other that is 'burrowed' deep into the perceivable subject. The added effect that the connection of this metaphor to Jim produces is that it foreshadows the staging of varying forms of committal that occur throughout the narrative. I choose the term committal for its additional suggestion of putting a person away or out of sight. Michael Greaney's exploration of embarrassment in this novel promotes this idea as he states that this is precisely what Brierly proposes in particular reference to Jim: he wants him "banished from sight" because he is "a colossal embarrassment to the European colonial establishment" (Greaney, 9). But, perhaps, that is more because Jim is unable to pretend about or cover up his moral dilemmas which he actually shows unabashedly. As a result, Brierly feels embarrassed by Jim's indecisiveness which he considers morally culpable, and also by the fact that Jim does not fit neatly into the judges' binary schemata, thus provoking Brierly's own psychological conflict and frustration. In effect, even though Brierly thinks of himself as probably the most honourable of seamen within that region, by his association with Jim's case, he feels tainted by Jim's dishonourable act. Besides, while symbolically condemning Jim to a funerary-like disappearance, his emphatic "*I* would!" sets him up as the frame of reference for this morbid recommendation for Jim. In thus directly juxtaposing himself against Jim and standardizing Jim against himself, he sets the basis for a contestation of the inherent binary implied in what he considers an unwelcome association.

It is worth noting that while Brierly scorns any connection to Jim because he feels morally tarnished by him, such a connection between the two of them extends spatiotemporally beyond the Asian port where he is compelled to literally sit in judgement of him. This indicates a sort of psychoanalytical bond between the two which adumbrates their eventual collision into each other. In this bond which again echoes Said's implication of the Other as a partial projection of the Self, Jim may be seen as Brierly's repressed Other, whose emancipatory act of willingly facing trial confronts Brierly with his worst fears of having to admit his connection to the dishonourable Jim, thereby sharing in his shame. Tracing this shameful connection back over place and time, he angrily declares:

> "Confound him! I wish he had never come out here. Fact is, I rather think some of my people know his. The old man's a parson, and I remember now I met him once when staying with my cousin in Essex last year. If I am not mistaken, the old chap seemed rather to fancy his sailor son. Horrible" (42).

In this exasperated outburst, Brierly reveals that the connection with Jim does not only transcend their immediate geographical location, but it also extends beyond their individual selves and links their 'people'. Besides, in the incident of having met Jim's father, the old parson's reference to his 'sailor son' inadvertently links the two men through an allusion to their common profession. From the force of the final vituperation – "Horrible!" – that sums up his observation that 'the old chap seemed rather to fancy' his son, there appears to be a slight hint of incest or homosexuality that is subtly implied and which is reinforced by the equivocal remark – 'If I am not mistaken' – with which he introduces this opinion. This apposition of familiar interrelations concluded with a suggestive hint at some obscure deed reveals that Brierly finds all of this connection quite despicable. Besides, what this outlining of a geospatial connection reveals is that Jim takes on a hybrid nature in which he is at once himself but also a reminder to the captain of his Western roots and even, perhaps, of his younger self. Thus, Jim becomes a representative of the social, cultural and professional ethos that shape subjectivity and form the basis of the personal convictions that an individual lives by. In becoming associated with Brierly, at all these levels, Jim's submission to the judicial inquiry possibly triggers a self-evaluation in Brierly who obviously comes to the shocking personal realisation that if he were in Jim's place, he would rather run away, than stand trial for his shortcoming. Marlow's provocative assertion of Jim's courage in this respect arguably causes Brierly to feel all the more doubtful of his personal convictions, as his encounter with and judgement of Jim forces on him the experience of aporia. For on the one hand, he is unable to accept the possibility of any other form of courage than that which he prescribes; whereas on the other hand, his very recommendation that Jim run away suggests that he, Brierly, is himself a coward. Thus, in a twist of representation, Jim, from the paradoxical and hybrid status of a courageous coward, faces up to his trial 'of his own free will', while Brierly, secretly a coward at heart, is unable to turn down what may seem to be a position of honour that forces him to sit in judgement of Jim. Consequently, it becomes possible to build on Conrad's aporia to suggest that while, as Marlow states, Jim's courage to face his trial constitutes for him a 'redeeming feature', Brierly's cowardice in not declining the proposition of standing judge over the 'abominable case' translates into a damning feature which likely culminates in his suicide.

To Marlow who tries to save Jim, to "keep [him] straight" (LJ, 41) and to help him redeem his honour from the shameful dereliction of duty, by keeping a disciplinary eye, so to speak, on him, Jim's hybridity is partly unveiled. This partial unveiling first occurs in the form of an obscure

image that does not present itself as a unified whole. Marlow states that shortly after his first personal encounter with Jim:

> The views he let me have of himself were like those glimpses through the shifting rents in a thick fog – bits of vivid and vanishing detail, giving no connected idea of the general aspect of a country. They fed one's curiosity without satisfying it; they were no good for purposes of orientation. Upon the whole he was misleading. That's how I summed him up to myself… (47).

This description is in many ways a gradual build-up to the representation of Jim as symbolising the inscrutable nature of man, a symbolism which makes him inseparable from and unifies him with Nature in both form and essence. By thus merging Jim with an unfolding landscape and with Nature, Marlow stages an ethnographic analysis of him. In recounting these impressions of Jim at the end of this initial encounter, Marlow, by evoking the imagery of a thick fog, conjures up notions of obscurity and of restricted visibility which reinforce Conrad's overall motif of inscrutability. Besides, the use of the term 'shifting rents' alludes to the violently wrenched strands of a drapery such as a curtain or a veil, while the 'glimpses' oscillating between 'bits of vivid and vanishing detail' indicate a frustration of overall clarity of impression through a visual engagement with the landscape. This obstruction of clarity is reflected in the assertion that, consequently, one obtains 'no connected idea of the general aspect of a country'. In this metaphorical comparison between Jim and a country, Marlow's transformation of Jim from a human subject into a geospatial landscape mapped precariously upon the visual imagination of the reader/ listener echoes a Westphalien transgressivity upon the narrative topos. According to Bertrand Westphal, transgression constitutes a way "of seeing what unfolds beyond the threshold" (42), where the threshold itself represents both a restriction – a *limes*, and a challenge – a limen. As a *limes*, (a boundary line), it was "intended to make one stop", whereas it simultaneously acted as a limen, (a porous border), "intended to be crossed" (42). In its paradoxical representation, the threshold acts both as a prohibition and an invitation, or, perhaps in stronger terms, a lure. Referring thus to Marlow's depiction of Jim from this perspective, the reader is at once presented with a duality of perception which, foggy in presentation, prevents the attainment of a full or clear picture of the character while, assuming a Westphalien "closed and striated space" (Westphal, 42), simultaneously makes one eager to see more. This duality, echoed in the characterisation of Jim,

drafts the listeners/ readers into the ethnographer role that Marlow plays, as we become complicit in 'reading' (or seeing) Jim through the landscape upon which he has been spatially transposed. Additionally, the character himself is also impacted by such a duality as he constantly strives toward a self-realisation through a persistent will to flee from one site of refuge to another. His constant flight, resulting from a determination to prevent others from getting to know his past failure by associating him with the Patna affair, also marks a persistent movement beyond his own self-doubt of ever reaching his heroic ideal, thus reflecting Marlow's optimistic musing: "And what if something unexpected and wonderful were to come of it?" (114). In line with such an optimistic view, it appears that for Jim, the probable 'what ifs' are what lures him in his persistent movement which is simultaneously aimed at achieving that 'something unexpected and wonderful' and at obscuring his past which together contribute to making him inscrutable.

In *A Personal Record*, Conrad himself attests to his persistent use of this recurring motif of inscrutability in his writing. Drawing from his confessed profuse exploitation of this technique, it is evident that, in this novel, Jim is constantly captured as "a figure behind the veil; a suspected rather than a seen presence – a movement and a voice behind the draperies of fiction" (*A Personal Record*, 4). This insinuation of a suspected presence also suggests the possibility of an absence which the narrator seems to persistently implore us to repudiate so that we may perceive and accept Jim as existing beyond myth. However, as I locate Jim within the broader context of Conrad's style, this notion of Jim as myth remains a compelling thought largely fuelled by hints at such motifs as 'the veil' and 'the draperies' which link to my analysis of Marlow's reference to his perception of Jim as through 'shifting rents'. Through his extensive use of these motifs of veiled and shifting sights in the narrative, Conrad succeeds in making Jim increasingly opaque to the point where we can only perceive him as a figment of our imagination. Consequently, this technique produces a double effacement of the character and results in making Jim appear steadily more fictionalised in this work of fiction. Hence, we observe that in his narration, Marlow deploys this fictionalising technique as he recounts the moment where Jim unburdens himself to him regarding the Patna affair. Describing the effect of Jim's morbid revelation on him, Marlow states that the "mist of his feelings shifted between us, as if disturbed by his struggles, and in the rifts of the immaterial veil he would appear to my staring eyes distinct of form and pregnant with vague appeal like a symbolic figure in a picture" (81). Marlow's description here depicts Jim as obscured in vagueness through the effects of the 'mist' and 'the rifts of the immaterial veil' conveyed

through Jim's feelings. By indicating that he observed Jim with 'staring eyes', Marlow alludes to a strained effort to better perceive, and so better understand him. Despite such an effort, however, he remains uncertain about Jim whom he compares to a 'symbolic figure in a picture'. This metaphorical reference to Jim freezes him in picture mode, reinforcing his portrayal as part of a creative piece of art – as fictionalised.

This fictionalisation of Jim harks back to his hybrid nature of being both a real person and an abstract idea which Marlow consistently alludes to. It also recalls Bhabha's mixed metaphor of a 'negative transparency' which invests Jim with the ability to be, at the same time, seen and not seen. This paradoxical quality characterising his existence and visibility renders Jim to some extent invisible. It additionally makes it possible for Marlow to associate him with different people and groups as he draws attention to Jim's hybridity, which he also acknowledges. Thus, while he asserts, or perhaps hopes, that Jim is "[his] very young brother" (136), Marlow also states that he belongs to the unsavoury and derelict masses who represent a darkness from which he must be rescued. In his half-hearted admission of a shared fraternity with Jim, Marlow observes:

> It struck me that it is from such as he that the great army of waifs and strays is recruited, the army that marches down, down into all the gutters of the earth. As soon as he left my room, that "bit of shelter," he would take his place in the ranks, and begin the journey towards the bottomless pit. […] It is when we try to grapple with another man's intimate need that we perceive how incomprehensible, wavering, and misty are the beings that share with us the sight of the stars and warmth of the sun. […] It was the fear of losing him that kept me silent, for it was borne upon me suddenly and with unaccountable force that should I let him slip away in to the darkness I would never forgive myself. (*LJ* 109.)

Marlow's description of Jim as belonging both with "the fellowship of the craft" (79), like himself, and with 'the great army of waifs and strays' depicts him as bearing a split image of self which reinforces his hybridity, his thirdness. Enhanced by his invisibility – the fact that he could be counted among seamen (considered honourable) and among 'waifs and strays' simultaneously – Jim's hybridity is deeply threatening because it exposes the indeterminacies of social identification and the variability of the beliefs upon which a set of ethics may be created. Attesting to the

disruptive ability of Jim's thirdness, Marlow states that it causes him to become less confident about what to say for fear of losing Jim altogether to the 'darkness'. As he becomes more keenly aware of Jim's shifty identity, he feels more compelled to draw him out of the darkness, out of the ranks of 'the army that marches down […] into all the gutters of the earth' so he might include him among socially acceptable ranks, even if as a "straggler yearning inconsolably for his humble place in the ranks" (137). For this reason, he keeps an eye on him. However, examining this surveillance still from Bhabha's notion of hybridity, we observe that Jim's consistently "proliferating difference evades that eye, escapes that surveillance" (Bhabha, 1994: 112) and fades into an inscrutable obliquity that defies inclusion in the ranks of authority. As he imposes upon himself a self-exile and retreats farther into the East, the fact cannot be ignored that he joins the masses of the discriminated. However, being a "white man" (149) in those parts, he never fully belongs and is considered as much a foreigner as any other immigrant. Nonetheless, even then, he is still considered as different; and we can yet perceive this as a hybridised sort of difference that "gets us out of the simple racial binaries of colonizer-colonized to speak of the particular circumstances by which this European subject learns, as it were, to heed difference, 'within' and 'without'" (Sanjay Krishnan, 2004: 345). As a result of being excessively sensitive to an overbearing sense of guilt and of being desirous of a fantasised ideal of self, Jim becomes separated from other Europeans by the burden of his illusive ideals. In Patusan, however, he is marked as different simply because he is identified as European. From this analysis, I conclude that it is through such a paradox of identification that Jim considers himself different from Europe's idea of what or who he must be, and therefore feels unaccepted in/ by Europe. It is also this that drives him into self-imposed exile resulting in his persistent flight from Europe and its representatives and models.

This, however, also marks a flight from himself and a cowering from his true identity, which lend weight to the proposition that Jim is a coward. Based on my argument that Jim is a coward, I further posit that the title of the text, 'Lord Jim', is in fact doubly voiced in the sense that throughout the narrative Jim is quite easily perceived to be a slave to his fears and doubts to which he, nevertheless, refuses to own up. This act of denial itself indicates his lack of courage, and much as he strives to believe in and live up to his illusory standard of bravery, he is really a coward at heart. This claim is consolidated by the way he deals with this ever-present undesirable trait by constantly skulking or running away from himself or from his nonetheless abiding memory

of himself and of his failures. In effect, our protagonist bears a double personality – real (cowardly) and imagined (brave). Such a duality captured in the ironical title, 'Lord Jim', leads me to argue that the titular incongruity gestures towards a representation of the Other in which the illusion of the self serves as a mask for the perpetuation of alterity. In this regard, Lefebvre's concept of a "double illusion" expounded in Soja's analysis of the thirdspace (Soja, 1996: 62) can help to elucidate Conrad's narrative. In a simplification of this concept, Soja refers to the double illusion as constituting "myopia (nearsightedness, seeing only what is right before your eyes and no further) and hypermetropia (farsightedness, seeing so far into the distance that what is immediately before you disappears)" (62). Drawing on these notions for my discussion I posit that thirdsight is the effect of all forms of ametropia including both myopia (not seeing the wood for the trees) and hypermetropia, and, especially, astigmatism resulting always in the blurring of vision, in the potential multiplicity of meaning, and in the possible failure, or compromise of ethical judgement. Understood in this way, thirdsight combines a series of optical processes very often occurring simultaneously or in such rapid succession as to be considered on the whole as one. These processes include visualisation and imagination, introspection and retrospection, projections and even wishes, all of which together inform existential questions framed by logico-epistemological spatio-temporalities surrounding the world of the text. While it may be quite easy to chart this phenomenon through an analysis of the symbolic universe of a text and through the experiences and realisations of the literary character confined in that universe, it is equally important to admit the, perhaps unlikely, probability of this phenomenon of thirdsighting to occur with the reader who experiences it subliminally through the text. Tallying this argument to Lefebvre's critique of the double illusion of transparency and opacity, I posit that, in reference to Conrad's narrative, all the possibilities of thirdsight comprehensively create a double illusion in the text. This "double illusion" goes right through from Jim's vision of himself to Marlow's vision of him (which, he admits, is never very clear), to Marlow's presentation of Jim for his listeners (seated and shrouded in darkness and seemingly disinterested and to whom Marlow seems to be trying to justify his tale), to his readers (for whom the reading of Marlow's narrative is a tortuous and complex affair and who no doubt oscillate between sympathy and critical judgement of Jim – perhaps exhibiting those very sentiments that the narrator hopes to arouse in us). The overall ambiguity created by all these levels of opacity, which conceal an illusion of transparency through their revelatory attempts, map themselves onto the character of Jim whose rather ironic "[s]olipsistic individuality masks

itself as heterotopic, where space functions for little beyond the consumption of otherness as a means of underwriting a fantasised self" (Madhu Krishnan, 2015: 686).

Krishnan's assertion about Jim's heterotopic posturing draws to my discussion the added dimension of Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, through which lens, an analysis of Jim's peripatetic search for self-affirmation becomes clearer. Foucault uses the analogy of the reflection of the self in the mirror as the starting point for developing his argument on heterotopias in general. Stating that the mirror is an utopia because it presents the subject with a visibility of itself within a virtual space, he further asserts that it is also a heterotopia in the sense that it retains its own reality while reflecting an image that is "at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there" (4). Thus, through the mirror, the subject can see itself in a space where it is not; or, in other words, it can perceive of its presence in absence. In Conrad's narrative, Jim appears to reflect, both through his character as through his lofty imagination, this metaphor of the mirror. In connection to Jim as an individual, this mirror metaphor is validated in the fact that for other characters, such as Marlow and Brierly, Jim reflects the Other of themselves that they would rather suppress or hide. With regard to himself, it is his vivid imagination that symbolises the mirror through which his real self and his heroic self are connected in space and time through his romantic ideals. After listening carefully to Marlow present Jim to him as "a specimen" (p. 129), Stein, the entomologist who collects butterflies and beetles, pathologically declares Jim a "romantic" (129). Even with this diagnosis, Stein indicates an ambivalence in such a trait as he states: "He is romantic – romantic, […]. And that is very bad – very bad. … Very good, too" (132). This verdict, equivocal at best, does not only allude to Jim's tendency to fantasise, but it also suggests that he may be illusory about his very existence. This extended implication of Stein's diagnosis is not lost on either Stein or Marlow. Marlow reveals this by observing that all the while they were talking about Jim: "We avoided pronouncing Jim's name as though we had tried to keep flesh and blood out of our discussion, or he were nothing but an erring spirit, a suffering and nameless shade" (131). To link this to my discussion of spectrality in my analysis of Razumov in *Under Western Eyes*, I assert that the comparison of Jim to a spirit or a shade through the circuitous reference to him results in a disembodiment of Jim that renders him Othered to the point of being likened to a spectre or a ghost that is plagued by sin and anonymity. Besides, as though to consolidate this disembodiment of Jim and the reduction of his existence to that of a distressed 'spirit' or a 'shade', Stein asks

Marlow: "What is it that by inward pain makes him know himself? What is it that for you and me makes him – exist? (132). From an essentialist perspective, Stein makes us call into question Jim's very existence. Besides, his enquiry, framed as a rhetorical question, indicates the need for Jim to look within himself in order to achieve self-actualisation which will in turn convince others about his authenticity. Therefore, in an extended Foucauldian sense, this question presents Jim as the mirror through which his own identity can be authenticated both to himself as to others. In effect, while Stein's question serves to buttress his judgement of Jim as romantic, it also provokes Marlow to reflect on what might be the true essence of Jim's existence. Consequently, Marlow recounts:

> At that moment it was difficult to believe in Jim's existence – starting from a country parsonage, blurred by crowds of men as by clouds of dust, silenced by the clashing claims of life and death in a material world – but his imperishable reality came to me with a convincing, with an irresistible force! I saw it vividly, as though in our progress through the lofty silent rooms amongst fleeting gleams of light and the sudden revelations of human figures stealing with flickering flames within unfathomable and pellucid depths, we had approached nearer to absolute Truth, which like Beauty itself, floats elusive, obscure, half submerged, in the silent still waters of mystery" (132).

In relation to this moment of reflection, I point out that throughout his narrative of Jim's peripatetic search for self-affirmation, Marlow often draws a parallel between Jim and geographical space/(s) – that is, space in either abstract (imagined) or concrete (real) forms. The comparison cited earlier between the character of Jim and the unclear view of a country covered in fog serves as one such example, and in the passage cited above he resorts to this technique once again. In his fast dissipating certainty about Jim's existence, Marlow conjures up images of place (concrete) and space (abstract) through which he portrays Jim in a paradox of reality and illusion. The image of the "country parsonage" relates to the actual geographical place from which Jim originates. However, this image is "blurred by crowds of men as by clouds of dust", a blurring which alludes to daily human activity, but which also calls up the biblical allusion to the "cloud of witnesses" watching the progress of Man's toil in the race of life. In the biblical reference to such a race, the expectation is for it to end with a crown of glory, an inference which can be extended to Marlow's assessment of Jim. However, in his growing scepticism, this arduous race, with respect to Jim, is

marked by futility as a result of being "silenced by the clashing claims of life and death in a material world." Marlow insists, nevertheless, on the reality of Jim's existence, only to disintegrate this reality once again by capturing his perception of it in ambivalent terms. Thus, though he claims to see Jim's existence "vividly", he counters that claim of clarity by his appeal to the contradictory metaphors of "lofty silent rooms," "fleeting gleams of light," and "sudden revelations of human figures stealing with flickering flames within unfathomable and pellucid depths." Consequently, even though Marlow obstinately tries to assert that Jim is real, he inadvertently admits to the "absolute Truth" that like an abstract idea such as Beauty, Jim is in essence "elusive, obscure, [and] half submerged, in the silent still waters of mystery." Analysing Marlow's assertion from the Foucauldian perspective of the mirror image further illuminates how the extensive use of metaphors such as "pellucid depths" and "still waters" allude to notions of transparency and accentuate the theme of reflection as a means by which an individual may identify, acknowledge, recognise and situate itself as a social subject. Further implied in this mirror imagery, however, is also the possibility of a blurred reflection or a miscalculated identification because the depths which represent the reflecting agent are "unfathomable". In effect, the subject risks winding up in a state of misrecognition in which its identified self is really only a creation of its imagination and derives from its illusions. In this state, the subject, through a process of interpellation, adopts its imagined identity, thereby becoming alienated from its true self. It is moreover important to draw attention to the fact that while Marlow is engaged in this moment of contemplation, he and Stein are actually walking through dark rooms within which there are "distant mirrors" where "the forms of two men and the flicker of two flames could be seen for a moment stealing silently across the depths of crystalline void" (132). This persistent allusion to mirror reflections is also used earlier with specific reference to Jim as he unburdens himself to Marlow and appears to be haunted as his "unconscious face reflected the passing expressions of scorn, of despair, of resolution – reflected them in turn, as a magic mirror would reflect the gliding passage of unearthly shapes" (94). In all of these instances, the trope of the mirror indicates or reflects heterotopic spaces and times that are triggered by the memory of Jim's failure and his struggle to become other than he perceives himself to be based on his past actions.

It is upon this same trope that Jim is ushered into Patusan, (where he temporarily masters his fate), on a "tiny black canoe… with two tiny men, all black, who toiled exceedingly, striking down at the pale water: and the canoe seemed to slide painfully on a mirror" (202). Here again the

mirror metaphor evokes the idea of a reflection of the subject from a space of reality onto a space of illusion which nonetheless encapsulates the real in time and space – a heterotopia. Thus, Patusan becomes this heterotopic space on the other side of the mirror into which Jim enters to discover and assert himself. That the canoe bearing him into the heart of Patusan along with its accompanying rowers are all black and tiny hints at some sort of dream experience. Such an allusion to a dream-like experience in connection to Jim's entry into Patusan is consolidated by Marlow's assertion that sending Jim to Patusan was like sending him "into a star of the fifth magnitude" where he "left his earthly failings behind him and what sort of reputation he had, and there was a totally new set of conditions for his imaginative faculty to work upon" (*LJ* 133). With reference to Patusan, George Panichas asserts that it is "another world" into which Marlow and Stein have schemed to "tumble" Jim who, as a "spiritual exile, alone and friendless," enters into "the wilderness of Patusan, where 'all sound and all movements in the world seemed to come to an end'" (Panichas 22). In an extensive discussion on dream sensations in *Lord Jim*, Kenneth Newell (2011) points out that Conrad's figurative comparison of life to a dream has been earlier referenced in the *Heart of Darkness* where Marlow relates his adventure in pursuit of Kurtz to a dream sensation, stating that "We live, as we dream – alone" (*Heart of Darkness*, 28 cited in Newell, 82). Likening this to dream-like references in *Lord Jim*, Newell points out that the features that typify Jim's life and experiences in Patusan as a dream are essentially that these experiences are "strange and remote," that they give "wondrous fulfillment," they are adventurous with the added qualities of "instability and precariousness," and they end in death which is itself "like a dream" (Newell, 82). All of these features can be identified in Jim's life in Patusan which, in its portrayal as an illusion, nevertheless signifies a complement to and a place of compensation as well as of penance for his earlier life and failings. In being captured in Patusan as in a dream, Jim's already vague character, as constantly indicated by Marlow, gains in elusiveness as it becomes unified with the dream-like Patusan, a heterotopia where all other spaces and places in relation to Jim converge, and where his reality remains unresolved as he comes to his end constantly "under a cloud" (*LJ*, 253).

While such a discussion of heterotopias within the novel elucidates the function of space, both real and imagined, as a means to inscribe Jim's Otherness through the ambivalence of reality and illusion, I further point out that this function of space within the novel is moreover consolidated by a reading of Marlow's rather lengthy narrative through de Certeau's notion of "space [as] a

practiced place" (1984:117). In this regard, space is conceived of as the actual enactment or display of an action, it is a place of activity in much the same way in which "an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs" (de Certeau, 1984:117). From de Certeau's analysis, it is important to note that function is essential to and invariably defines space through the practice of a particular activity prompted by a particular place. It is the practice of such an activity that constitutes a "system of signs." For my discussion on *Lord Jim*, this perspective of de Certeau's analysis elucidates my argument as I point out that Jim's Otherness is the space produced by the projection of an imagined self, which encapsulates all the possibilities of what he can be and do, onto his real self. This projection is carried out not only by Jim himself, but also by other characters, like Brierly and Stein, and especially by Marlow, whose support of Jim also masks a latent expectation for him to measure up and prove himself. These imaginations of Jim then constitute the system of signs that prompt his Othering. Thus, when all the signs in the text are taken together, it becomes viable to perceive Jim as occupying that space of the Other who exists in relation to the spaces alluded to by Marlow. Drawing further on de Certeau, this notion of Jim as an embodiment of Otherness through the ambivalence of real and imagined spaces can be understood from the added perspective that "[s]pace occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs and contractual proximities" (de Certeau 117). From this angle, de Certeau argues that space, emerging from specific practices, results from a combination of actions related to and contributing to the space-producing practices; and that in being thus formed from a culmination of several actions, that space invariably becomes an unstable and a compromising entity, lending itself to varying interpretations depending on the context. In my analysis of Conrad's novel, I posit that this is the sort of space that Jim morphs into: a space of Otherness that is, simultaneously, the inferior self of the superior image that Jim has of himself, the inferior subject of the superior Self that is represented by the likes of Marlow, Stein and Brierly, the superior Other of the Other's Other captured in such despicable characters like the engineer, Cornelius and Gentleman Brown, and even the superior Self referred to in Patusan as the "white lord" (165) whose "especial protection" (202) of the land was restoring in the people a "belief in the stability of earthly institutions" (236). In light of all of these functions that Jim performs in relation to embodying the space of Otherness, it becomes clear how it is that he forms a "polyvalent unity of conflictual programs and contractual proximities" through the fact that he

is at once all of these identities that might seem to contradict but which in actual fact complement each of their opposites while aggregating into that evasive subject who is caught in the ambiguity of existence.

From my foregoing analysis, I assert that Marlow's narration of Jim's life, actions and related events gives the impression of creating what Edward Soja explains as:

> *The illusion of transparency*, […] [which] makes space appear "luminous," completely intelligible, open to the free play of human agency, wilfulness, and imagination. It also appears innocent, free of traps or secret places, with nothing hidden or dissimulated, always capable of being "taken in by a single glance from that mental eye which illuminates whatever it contemplates" (Soja 63).

In this explanation of Lefebvre's notion of the double illusion, Soja highlights the seemingly panoramic nature of perception that gives the impression that reality can be captured in an all-revealing glance through one's imagination. He holds, however, that such a perception is, at best, deceptive or illusory as it substitutes the real with that which is imagined, leaving actuality to be defined by an "'encrypted reality'" (63) constructed through discourse. A reading of Marlow's narration of Jim through this notion of the illusion of transparency foregrounds and facilitates an understanding of the subjectivism of Marlow's representation of Jim who, being reduced to a subject of knowledge through the narrator's discourse, represents a subject who would be invariably analysed on the basis of that which is communicated or known about him, hence creating the illusion of being "completely intelligible" while in fact remaining mysterious because obscure. Besides, with specific regard to this reference from Soja, I further advance my argument through a conceptualisation of Jim-as-space taking my cue from Marlow's comparison of Jim to a landscape or a country which I have earlier alluded to. Pursuing this spatial metaphor, I argue that as Jim evolves, revealing different aspects of himself, his nature becomes palimpsestic. This is because even though he tries to forge a new identity free of his past, the earlier places and experiences he has passed through leave visible traces on his identity. In effect, Jim's emerging form, superimposed on a past that he has tried to efface, persistently bears vestiges of his earlier self that define him and contribute to his construction of an identity. Moreover, in his metaphorical

spatial self, Jim, through his fantasies, transposes the imagined over the real so that by the end of the narrative, the real spaces such as the Eastern port of the Patna affair, and other seaports to and from which he flees in exile, are overshadowed by the Utopic and dream-like Patusan, in as much the same way as his real self is eclipsed by his imagined self which Marlow always refers to as inscrutable as result of its indistinct presentation. In this respect, I borrow Soja's terminology in my analysis of Jim and contend that the character is presented to us through an illusion of transparency which makes him appear luminous, whereas we detect that he is in actual fact dissimulated through the impressions of him given to us by Marlow and through the free play of his own imagination upon his subjectivity. As a result, it is impossible to take him in by a single glance of the mental eye, for in order to properly make him out we need to attempt a bifurcated gaze that distinguishes between the real and the imagined while yet discerning the liminal categories that exist between these polarities.

For Jim, it is such categories of liminality that strongly impact his identity. For he is neither fully one thing nor the other, and as he tries to fit in as a social being within the different spaces in which he finds himself, he is plagued by the demands of systemic conventions that require him to conform or be considered aberrant. In that regard, to conform would suggest a moral uprightness that is universally approved, whereas to deviate would imply a depravity that suggests a lack of regard for the rules. Through Marlow's narrative, we are urged to consider that the fact that Jim makes an effort at all to live up to the rules or to conform is basis enough to adjudge him morally sound. Thus, Marlow's efforts at presenting Jim clearly are really efforts to assert the latter's moral identity. While this endeavour seems more specifically related to Marlow our narrator within the context of the text, the reader cannot help but think that the author is himself determined to use his character to highlight such moral ambiguities that query the moral supremacy of socially determined and universally accepted standards or rules. In this regard, Conrad declares that *Lord Jim* is a story about

> those struggles of an individual trying to save from the fire his idea of what his moral identity should be, this precious notion of a convention, only one of the rules of the game, nothing more, but all the same so terribly effective by its assumption of unlimited power over natural instincts, by the awful penalties of its failure (LJ, 50).

This individual is, of course, the eponymous character Jim whose whole existence is built primarily on an idea, a notion, extended from his imagination of himself – of what he is and what he is becoming. Informed by ideas he has amassed from his reading of "light literature" (LJ, 4; 5) about sea-going adventures, he imagines himself to be a perfect seaman on his way to becoming a heroic adventurous marine officer. This imagined self is what Jim tries to 'save from the fire', the fire symbolising the challenges of real life which threaten to scorch his fantasised beliefs and notions of himself and his abilities. The indication that his imagined, fantasised self is in actual fact created from his fictional readings draws attention to the power of fiction explored in this fictional work. It, therefore, becomes obvious that Jim forms his notions of the ideal from fiction and transposes these on reality. In effect, he is trapped in the illusion of the ideal as he trips over himself to attain heroic status. As Linda Dryden observes of Conrad's heroes, such a preoccupation to attain heroism "is the illusion of fiction, an insubstantial dream posed against the limitations of individual character" (78). By thus implying the power of fiction to influence its readers, Conrad gives the impression of capitalising on this power to force his readers to develop a critical sense of inquiry into the conventions and rules that we live by rather than to give in to self-delusion. In this way, he expatiates on the possibility of the very opposite effect that fiction has on Jim as he incites his readers to judge or evaluate themselves and society by identifying in Jim our individual alter egos that remind us of our own fallibility, thereby saving us from the delusion of being able to attain some fanciful heroic ideal. A close reading of the text reveals that Jim's story seems to have such an effect on Marlow, whose narration consistently draws attention to the thin line between truth and illusion as he states that between the two "there is so little difference, and the difference means so little" (136). Thus, Marlow leaves his listeners with such a feeling of ambivalence about his narrative and about the existence of Jim even though he tries hard to convince us that his story is true. The irony presented with this ambivalent situation is that whereas, through Marlow's narration, Conrad highlights the "power of words" (109) to simultaneously delude and convince, he also demonstrates how such power captured in fiction affects the imagination of his main character, Jim, to the point of complete delusion. For while Marlow insists on the truth of his narration, he equally indicates that his encounter with Jim has caused him to doubt his own belief systems and to question "the illusion of [his own] beginnings" (109). Left in this state of uncertainty, he becomes "afraid to speak, in the same way one dares not move for fear of losing a slippery hold" (109). Even though Marlow goes further to explain that this "fear of losing a

slippery hold" relates directly to his efforts to save Jim from obscurity, we, the readers, cannot help but think that this metaphor also directly refers to his narration which hovers between fact and fiction, between truth and illusion. We, therefore, become profoundly aware of his struggle to convince us about the reality of his story, which is redolent of fantasy, as he describes it as "the truth disclosed in a moment of illusion" (196). Such moments of illusion are not lost on the reader who Conrad drafts into his pool of "silent listener[s]" (LJ, 21) as he tries to convince his audience, through Marlow, that Jim was "one of us" (LJ, 2). To strongly make this point, Marlow metaphorically describes Jim as an everyman who represents "all the parentage of his kind, […] men and women by no means clever or amusing, but whose very existence is based upon honest faith, and upon the instinct of courage" (27). By thus linking Jim with all mankind, Marlow asserts his propinquity to us. However, Marlow's revelation that Jim displays a "breach of faith with the community of mankind" (95) when he jumps from the sinking *Patna* leaving the eight hundred pilgrims on board to a perilous fate proves that Jim is really not "one of us" but that he is in fact an extension of each of us in the sense that through him we are able to assess ourselves. Like some shadowy double of our individual selves, he provides the safe distance from which we may identify and appraise our fantasies and illusions. So, I argue that he is consistently portrayed as an Other whose actions, thoughts and life serve as "reminders of our folly, of our weakness, of our mortality; all that makes against our efficiency—the memory of our failures, the hints of our undying fears" (106). Such a portrayal of Jim as an alter ego is consolidated by the fact that Marlow identifies in him a younger version of himself, and in his retrospective narration, he relies on his memories and imaginations of Jim, thereby rendering him more shadowy than human to the reader.

Thus, by inference from Marlow's own words, we are invited to consider that Jim does not directly exist for us and that we can only imagine him: "He existed for me, and after all it is only through me that he exists for you" (137). In this statement, the first 'me' refers to Marlow-the-character, whereas the second 'me' refers to Marlow-the-narrator. Therefore, in relation to this assertion, it is important to note that this is Marlow-the-narrator speaking to us of Jim's existence for Marlow-the-character. I must also point out that even for Marlow-the-narrator, there is a certain extent to which Jim only exists for him through his past encounter with him as Marlow-the-character up to his final visit with Jim in Patusan. For the rest of the narrative, Marlow-the-narrator depends on what he has later heard of Jim from the disreputable Gentleman Brown, all of which he has captured in a letter to a "privileged reader" (214). Thus, from that point, Marlow sees Jim

only through the eyes of Gentleman Brown and, in a prelude to this portion of his narrative, he admits that "it is impossible to see [Jim] clearly – especially as it is through the eyes of others that we take our last look at him" (206). This is equally true for the reader, for it is only through the eyes of others that we are able to perceive Jim. Besides, Marlow's admission here may very well connect to his arbitrary confession that he hardly understands nor sees Jim clearly himself. Thus, his admission-confession is suggestive of a visual opacity that metaphorically undermines the transparency that Marlow lays claim to in revealing Jim to us. His concern that we do not see Jim clearly enough creates an illusion of opacity which nourishes and complements the illusive transparency of his narrative purpose, viz, to reveal Jim to us. To "see him clearly" one would need to break through at least five levels of opacity. At the first level is Jim (as object). At the second level is Marlow (as privileged perceiving subject) up to his final personal contact with Jim in Patusan, after which he is substituted by Gentleman Brown. At the third level are Marlow's audience, (representing the 'narratee'), who are intratextual as they exist within the text. At the fourth level, (as secondary perceiving subjects – since we see Jim through Marlow's eyes), are Marlow's empirical readers who are extratextual as they exist outside the text. At a fifth level the agents that I locate at the fourth level become super-privileged perceiving subjects to whom Conrad presents the rest of the story through Marlow's written account of Jim to a "privileged man" (205) who, (with Conrad's readers), is the only one of all Marlow's listeners to "ever hear the last word of the story" (205). At this fifth level, the super-privileged agents are given an insight on Jim in the final phase of his life through the omniscient narrator who takes over the narration, subsuming Marlow's written account under his omniscient perspective. Extending this analysis beyond the world of the text, it is worth noting that, in his author's note, Conrad, commenting on the sheer length of the narrative and on the criticism that he "had been bolted away with" (1), declares that the story was not very clear to him either and that "all [the] moods and stirrings of spirit were rather obscure [to him] at the time, and […] do not appear clearer […] now after the lapse of so many years" (1). In his own struggle to counter the double illusion of opacity and transparency Conrad inadvertently casts Jim in an-Other space that transposes him beyond the dichotomous us-and-them logic and frames him as an all-inclusive 'third-as-Other'. From this I draw the conclusion that, by constructing his characters through several layers of perception, Conrad's politics of representation constantly seek to subvert a binary portrayal of difference through stable oppositions but upholds the possibility of varying degrees of difference that nullify

dualism. It is in this regard that Conrad's narrative style, perhaps intuitively, presents Jim progressively as a disembodied character whose "form [is always] under a cloud – perfectly silent (2); and who, for Marlow, existed as "a mere white speck at the heart of an immense mystery, […] standing disregarded […] but always mute, dark – under a cloud" (208). At the end of the narrative, when Jim decisively surrenders to the wrath of the chieftain Doramin and he is shot dead, Conrad builds on this technique to further obscure Jim in the opacity of disembodiment while yet insisting through Marlow on his shared affinity with 'us' – narrator, listeners, and readers:

> And that's [his] end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, […].
>
> But we can see him, an obscure conqueror of fame, tearing himself out of the arms of a jealous love at the sign, at the call of his exalted egoism. He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct. Is he satisfied – quite, now, I wonder? We ought to know. He is one of us – and have I not stood up once, like an evoked ghost, to answer for his eternal constancy? Was I so very wrong after all? Now he is no more, there are days when the reality of his existence comes to me with an immense, with an overwhelming force; and yet upon my honour there are moments, too, when he passes from my eyes like a disembodied spirit astray amongst the passions of his earth, ready to surrender himself faithfully to the claim of his own world of shades. (253)

Indicating upon Jim's demise that he remains "under a cloud" and "inscrutable at heart" Marlow insists nevertheless that "we can see him" even now. He, however, continues to emphasise the opacity of this perception by qualifying Jim as an "obscure conqueror of fame". It is worth pointing out that on the one hand, the term "obscure" as used here would readily evoke the adjectival meaning of that which is undiscovered, unknown, and of which one is uncertain or of that which is unclear or not easily understood. On the other hand, however, the term also draws attention to its use as a verb to indicate the effort to keep something from being seen, to conceal. From Marlow's narration it might be possible to suggest that the obscuring of Jim provides the opportunity for other characters to conceal the truth of their own convictions. For it seems that while Jim blindly tries to live out his convictions and rigidly stand for his ideals, however romantic they may be, this attitude provokes in other characters an assessment of their own convictions while drawing to the fore memories or secrets that they would rather not disclose. Captain Brierly,

for instance, is affected in this way and, seemingly unable to deal with a secret shame, he drowns himself, carrying his secret with him. Marlow insinuates that as he served as judge over Jim's case, "he was probably holding silent inquiry into his own case. The verdict must have been of unmitigated guilt, and he took the secret of the evidence with him in that leap into the sea" (36). Conrad's indication of guilt here comes across as intentionally ambiguous, as it seems to refer simultaneously to Jim as to Brierly. Also, in his discussion with Marlow about Jim, Stein suggests that everybody, including himself, has a secret failing or two (133). In response to Marlow's remark about Jim letting a "splendid opportunity [to] escape" (132) unlike others would do who may have dreamt for so long about such an opportunity, Stein cuts him short and states: "And do you know how many opportunities I let escape, how many dreams I had lost that had come in my way?" (132). Earlier in this conversation, Stein prescribes that "the way" to live is "in the destructive element immerse" and to "follow the dream, […] *ewig – usque ad finem*" (forever – until the end) (131). Thus, in his attempt to follow his dream to the end, Jim abandons life itself, including Jewel, the orphaned ward of Cornelius whom he falls in love with in Patusan, "to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct" – shadowy because they are at best ill-defined. By this, Marlow refers to Jim's decision to give himself up to Doramin to be killed for the death of Doramin's son Dain Warris because Jim felt that he had failed to protect this son, who was also his best friend, from being killed by Gentleman Brown. While Marlow states that he is not sure if Jim has finally found peace from this action, he solicits the complicity of his listeners-readers in his conclusion as he contends that "we ought to know" because Jim is "one of us". Within the same breath, however, Marlow here again expresses an uncertainty as to the reality of Jim's existence; and in this ambivalence of his insistence on and denial of Jim's existence he at once animates Jim for his audience and then promptly effaces him before our very eyes. The very effort made to send him off to Patusan constitutes also an attempt to obliterate him by isolating him from known society and confining him to the unknown – an act which also hints at concealment. Thus, once again, Marlow vacillates between revealing and concealing Jim, between affirming and obliterating him. In a similar observation of Marlow's deployment of such a technique of affirmation and negation with regard to Jim, Paul Kintzele states that even though Marlow continues to insist that Jim is "one of us", throughout his narration Jim "is constantly placed in scenes of isolation, concealment, and confinement; like Leggatt in 'The Secret Sharer' he is present by his particular absence" (Kintzele, 74).

To thus help us better 'see' Jim, Marlow asserts, "I've led him out by the hand; I have paraded him before you" (137). This idea of leading Jim out by the hand and parading him before others casts him in the frame of an exhibit that is displayed under the scrutinising gaze of intent observers. What, in actual fact, Marlow does here is to appeal to our imagination to picture and perceive Jim as he has constructed him for us. This appeal extends from Marlow's constant emphasis on Jim's imaginative tendencies, in reference to which he states that what he feared most about Jim was "how imaginative he was, and your imaginative people swing farther in any direction, as if given a longer scope of cable in the uneasy anchorage of life" (137). So, ironically, Marlow appeals to his audience to extend our imagination to better perceive Jim, whereas he expresses his apprehension over Jim's own rather excessive imaginative drive. Worthy of note in this regard is the fact that, throughout the narrative, such references to the power of the imagination abound. For Marlow's listeners/ readers, the imagination motif is indicated as the tool through which we may better 'see' Jim; and for Jim, it serves as his means for negotiating an identity. Thus, while this trope is stylistically deployed as Jim's device for self-construction, its telescopic focus on him aimed at revealing him to the reader, gives it an ethnographic function that Others him through Marlow's additional treatment of him as an exhibit 'paraded' under the imaginative gaze of his audience.

In his own imagination, however, Jim thinks of himself as a superior heroic kind and, often, while at sea in a busy ship, "he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of [great adventure]. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; […]. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean kept up the hearts of despairing men – always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book." (5). In this fascinating vision of himself and his abilities, Jim imagines himself as chivalrous. It is interesting to note that as he elevates himself to this grand status, he equally engages in an act of Othering in which he stages himself as the dominant force that confronts 'savages on tropical shores', imposes calm over riotous situations and restores hope to the faint-hearted. The irony of these imaginations is that they are really just fantasies. For when, in reality, he is confronted by an emergency at sea he freezes into inaction; and while others bustle around him to counter the emergency all he does is stand still (5). Afterwards, when calm returns and he hears the other shipmates excitedly discuss the event, he finds it all "very contemptible," "a pitiful display of

vanity" and "felt sure" that in the face of "greater perils" "[w]hen all men flinched, […] he alone would know how to deal with the spurious menace of wind and seas." (7). Besides, we further observe that, in direct connection to Marlow's tale, when as chief mate of the Patna, he is once again confronted with a crisis at sea, he numbs once again into inaction; and eventually when he does take an action, it is to jump out of the ship, saving himself and abandoning the 800 pilgrims on board to the vagaries of the sea. From this comparison between the real and Jim's ideal, I contend that an analysis of the character through thirdsight reveals a trichotomous existence in which we can identify Jim's idea of himself as separate from how he is presented to us by Marlow which may also vary from what we, in actual fact, perceive him to be. This is because both Jim's and Marlow's presentations are triangulated by our own assessment of the character, of his actions, and of his opinions about himself and others, thus leaving us to form our own impressions of him. In effect, as we gradually follow him through the rest of the story, we remark how his delusions cause him to project "headlong into the fanciful realm of recklessly heroic aspirations. […] penetrating deeper into the impossible world of romantic achievements" (51). Living thus imprisoned in his idea of who and what he is, Jim fails to come to terms with reality and also fails to be one of us as he transforms into more of an imagined character living an imaginary life. In this way, Jim is Othered in the fact that he remains more imaginary than real, and the insights that we gain into the dissonance between his ideal self and his real self are mediated through thirdsight.

The other way in which our perception of Jim is Othered through thirdsight is through the use of the animal metaphor. Marlow names two animals in connection with Jim. The first is a yellow dog that happens to be mysteriously around the court where Jim's enquiry was held. We can 'see' it and can actually form a mental picture of this dog from Marlow's description of it. As people crowd out of the court after the day's hearing of Jim's case, someone right behind Marlow nearly trips over the dog and indignantly says: "Look at that wretched cur". As this reaches Jim's hearing he assumes it is in reference to him, as he does not notice the dog. As a result, he confronts Marlow about it only to realise his mistake much later. However, while, as readers, we have the advantage of this play of dramatic irony on our main character, we cannot help but also have our perception of him once again triangulated by the interference of "the wretched animal" (46). From this ostensibly innocuous interruption that causes us to shift our mental gaze from Marlow to the dog and then to Jim and back to the dog, we irrevocably make a connection between Jim and the dog, a connection that he has already facilitated by the mistake of thinking the statement was made

in reference to him and thereby taking offence. Later on, as he unburdens himself to Marlow, he again makes reference to this incident when he asks him: “You think me a cur for standing there, but what would you have done? What! You can’t tell – nobody can tell.” (57). Thus, the parallel between Jim and the dog is sustained by his own persistent use of the metaphor to demand an evaluation of his actions.

In her analysis of this incident, Sanjay Krishnan points out that there is

> the mix of half-comprehended sights and sounds concatenated around the dog. […] the stranger stumbles over the yellow dog as a result of being distracted by the ‘high-pitched shrewish tone’ of the native woman. This subtle association between native and animal is reinforced by the sound of an ‘oriental voice’ […] within the courtroom that ‘whines abjectly’ […]. This resonance offers the first indication of a world excluded from yet operating alongside Marlow’s narrative agenda. (Krishnan, S. 336).

But in effect, it is to this world, real and imagined, structurally involved yet essentially excluded, that Jim is eventually ‘abandoned’ (LJ, 95). This paradoxically excludes Jim from being ‘one of us’ despite Marlow’s persistent yet weak insistence on his inclusion in the moral world, a world in which one is able to make morally good, and fair judgements of situations. He fails to do this already, at the beginning of the narrative and continually throughout the rest of the text.

The second animal that is mentioned with regard to Jim is a bull. Right at the beginning of his narrative, Marlow, in his description of Jim’s stature, observes: “He was […] powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull” (3). Once again, this image of Jim is reinforced by the singular word “buffalo” (44) which Marlow hears from the court on the same occasion on which he is being confronted by Jim about the mistaken insult of being called a “wretched cur”. That the image of the bull should be recalled at this time simultaneously with the actual presence of the dog, and that this should happen while Marlow feels cornered by Jim and in clear danger of a physical attack from Jim lends credence to the assumption that the images of the animals are here evoked metaphorically in reference to Jim.

Besides, this technique of alluding to animals in reference to Jim is sustained through Marlow's description of the landscape as he walked to the court on the morning of Jim's sentencing. On the one hand he (Marlow) is concerned about Jim's "execution" being "a hole-and-corner affair" (95) with "no high scaffolding, no scarlet cloth […], no awe-stricken multitude to be horrified at his guilt and be moved to tears at his fate" (96). On the other hand, on his way to the court for the determination of an inexorable judgement of culpability, the sights he is confronted with include:

> the clear sunshine, [with] a brilliance too passionate to be consoling, the streets full of jumbled bits of colour like a damaged kaleidoscope: yellow, green, blue, dazzling white, the brown nudity of an undraped shoulder, *a bullock-cart with a red canopy*, a company of native infantry in a drab body with dark heads marching in dusty laced boots, […]. (96 emphasis mine)

These sights accompanying Jim's sentencing form a subtle parallelism between the allusion to "scaffolds and heads rolling" (96) and Jim's "execution" (95). And from these it is possible to make up for the absence of an "awe-stricken multitude" with the presence of a rather grey "company of native infantry in a drab body", the grim aspect of which characterises the whole judgement. Besides, as though the suggestive chaotic portrayal of the trial and of the accused through the 'jumbled bits of colour' from a 'damaged kaleidoscope' is not disconcerting enough, our narrator has to notice and include images of 'nudity' and of 'a bullock-cart with a red canopy'. These images contribute the doleful effect of replacing the 'high scaffolding' and the 'scarlet cloth' of a definite execution by transposing the notion of such a death from the historico-geographical site of "Tower Hill" (96), (representing the site of the Tower of London, and an ancient fortress on the east side of the city of London, famously used as a prison and a place of execution), to the anonymous South Pacific site of Conrad's narrative. While the 'nudity of the undraped shoulder' may allude to the uncovering of a convicted person's body in preparation for a beheading, the 'bullock-cart with a red canopy' may hint at an improvised hearse or bier appropriate to the "picturesque" (96) setting which looked "like a chromo-lithograph of a camp in a book of Eastern travel" without the "obligatory thread of smoke in the foreground and the pack-animals grazing" (96). Once more, the association of the bullock to Jim's sentencing and the evocation of anarchy drawn out by the observation of the absence of peacefully grazing pack-animals in the entire scene

sets a parallel between aggression and composure, between Jim's guilt (a rashness of action devoid of morality, like the charging of an unthinking bull) and his fate (the abject fate of amoral animals, serenely grazing yet static in time) which attract "the cold vengefulness of a death sentence, [in the form of] a sentence of exile" (97).

A further reference to the animal metaphor occurs in Jim's early account to Marlow of his self-imposed exile to Patusan, the out-of-the-way Malay country to which he flees and where he hopes to stay hidden from the shame of his past. In his recollection of his dramatic arrival in Patusan, he describes his despondent condition by using an animal metaphor. He states that upon his unexpected arrival, the royal governor of the native people and his council endlessly deliberate upon what to do with him, strongly considering that he "be killed without more delay" (154). Realising the perilous situation he is in, Jim makes an escape and, running towards a muddy creek, he takes a "flying" leap (154), landing in the mud. As he relates this experience to Marlow, Jim states that when he laboriously emerges from the mud he thinks he is "alone […], alone, with no help, no sympathy, no pity to expect from any one, *like a hunted animal*" (156, emphasis mine). In this account, the recurring metaphorical allusion to the animal is further qualified by the notion of being hunted. This additional description suggests that, in his self-exile, Jim is not only separated from humanity by the fact that he is likened to an animal, but he is also hounded, persecuted, by his knowledge of himself (from which he permanently remains a fugitive), from the community of mariners among whom his shame remains an open secret, and also by sections of the native people in Patusan who consider him a stranger. These cross-references between Jim and animals which establish Jim as an Other through animalisation has the effect of dehumanising Jim so that he becomes invariably excluded from humanity. As a result, it becomes evident that his self-exile to Patusan represents also an extreme form of exclusion that captures him as some sort of social outcast. Thus, it is possible to 'see' Jim as Marlow wants us to: as "one of us" through a rather strained effort at inclusion and acceptance in spite of prevailing counter evidence. However, I also argue that through a 'thirding' of our perception of how Jim is presented in the narrative, Marlow may very well be more forcefully implying that Jim is in fact 'Other' to us, representing the ugly truths about ourselves that we would rather suppress and keep out of the sight of others.

In line with my argument that Jim is presented to us as an Other, I further submit that his Othering is enhanced through the contacts that he makes throughout the narrative. A close consideration of Conrad's *Lord Jim* reveals that the novel can be read as a "contact zone" along the lines theorised by Mary Louise Pratt at two levels – both at the level of the narrative as on the level of encounters described within the text. Analysing the text from this viewpoint, Marlow's narrative may yet retain notions of the old discourse of imperial superiority. However, the notion of contact points up the limitations of Marlow's master narrative. Deploying Pratt's concept of the contact zone in his examination of travel and exploratory literature, N. E. Currie affirms that "the contact zone […] creates its own context as two parties meet and form relationships that cannot entirely be understood within the framework of either party. Instead, each group must feel its way into interactions with the other, essentially creating a new shared culture in the process." While this statement already draws attention to the creation of a third space within the context of the contact zone, Currie further asserts that "[a]lthough one [party] may have greater power than [the other] in the […] encounter, the process of transformation is not one-directional, nor does it happen only in the literal space of contact." (13). Thus, he suggests the possible occurrence of a multi-directional process and also hints at the fact that such a process may also take place in virtual or imagined space. Following from this line of thought, I further agree with his claim that "textual history […] transports the contact zone from the Pacific coastline to the moment of reading, in the here and now […] and invites us as readers to also make meanings in relationship to the text" (13). It is in this sense that I consider Conrad's *Lord Jim* as an "ongoing contact zone" (Currie, 13) which not only reveals Jim's encounters, but which also anticipates many more imagined encounters through which we are invited to "imagine" Jim and, perhaps, along with Conrad "to seek fit words for his meaning" (LJ, 2).

In my consideration of these encounters with regard to Jim, I also take the notion of hybridity as theorised by Homi Bhabha as "a problematic of […] representation […] that reverses the effects of […] disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (1994: 114). I defer to this notion of hybridity because it helps us to discover, through a close examination of Conrad's text, various interstices of overlapping meaning which may be derived from that which he is not saying – the 'denied' knowledges embedded within Marlow's narrative which culminate in formulating an Othered image of Jim. A deciphering of such instances of silence or of unspoken facts undermines the

superiority and reliability of Marlow's authoritative representation of Jim as it reveals subtle inferences from the associations that Jim has with other characters in which he is depicted as an Other.

For this analysis, I proceed by focusing on the keyword 'encounter' in the text. This focus allows me to delimit my discussion to a few specific examples that illuminate my point about the novel as a contact zone in which we meet Jim whose alterity is portrayed to us through Marlow's Othering narrative. Besides, I mainly look at the encounter between Marlow and Jim as I consider this the primary encounter that produces all other encounters in the narrative. Considering the endless number of encounters that proliferate the narrative, it is worth noting that the actual word 'encounter' occurs only four times in the whole text. The first two instances in which this word appears refer to Marlow's altercation with Jim, and the final two instances occur in relation to a feeling of fear that Marlow expresses regarding two other persons connected to Jim in a love-hate drama. While these two pairs of incidents are in no way directly related, it is, however, possible to draw a link between them as, from the one set to the other, one can sense Marlow's growing sense of trepidation with regard to Jim and his interrelations. To examine the first two instances in which this word occurs, let us return to a passage discussed in a different light above. This passage relates to the occasion of Jim's confrontation of Marlow when he believes he has heard himself being referred to as a dog. In his narration of that exchange, Marlow states that when Jim asked "Did you speak to me?" (44), he, answering in the negative, felt that:

> Something in the sound of that quiet tone of his warned me to be on my defence. I watched him. It was very much like a meeting in a wood, only more uncertain in its issue, […]. 'Some mistake,' I protested, […] never taking my eyes off him. To watch his face was like watching a darkening sky before a clap of thunder, shade upon shade imperceptibly coming on, the doom growing mysteriously intense in the calm of maturing violence.
>
> I was getting a little angry, too, at *the absurdity of this encounter*. It strikes me now I have never in my life been so near a beating – I mean it literally; a beating with fists. I suppose I had some hazy prescience of that eventuality being in the air. Not that he was actively threatening me. On the contrary, he was strangely passive […]

> but he was lowering, and, though not exceptionally big, he looked generally fit to demolish a wall. (44 emphasis mine).

This incident marks the first time Marlow actually comes into direct physical proximity to Jim. Hitherto, he has observed him from the distance of an interested or, perhaps, curious, yet nonchalant, spectator at the court trial. From his narration, we gather that during much of that observation, Marlow simply wonders about Jim's psychological disposition. So, this close encounter represents a defining moment in which he experiences Jim as a rather impetuous character. Feeling the need to be 'on his defence' against such impetuousness, Marlow also indicates the 'absurdity of the encounter' and remarks how this made him a little angry. As he recalls this confrontation that 'was very much like a meeting in a wood', Marlow describes Jim's attitude through the extended metaphor of a 'darkening sky before a clap of thunder' and sums him up as 'lowering'. All of these comparisons draw attention to the insinuation of something dismal in Jim's nature that could inadvertently result in calamity either for himself or for people he came into contact with. Marlow, in fact, points to this when he states that, as he assessed this hostile encounter, he was "conscious of a certain trepidation as to the possibility—nay, likelihood—of this encounter ending in some disreputable brawl" which would make him appear "ridiculous" (44).

This sense of trepidation is carried over into Marlow's journey to Patusan to see how Jim is faring. During his visit, he meets the girl aliased 'Jewel' with whom Jim has fallen in love in Patusan and who expresses her deep anxiety to Marlow about the possibility of Jim eventually leaving her. She harbours this fear due to her deep suspicion that Jim is haunted by something he is running away from but which he would not reveal to her. She, therefore, charges Marlow to tell her what it is; and in his narration of the arduous and "hopeless" (192) task he faces in calming her fears, he states that he wished he could simply say to her: "Have no fear!" (192). However, there was

> Nothing more difficult. How does one kill fear, I wonder? How do you shoot a spectre through the heart, slash off its spectral head, take it by its spectral throat? It is an enterprise you rush into while in a dream, and are glad to make your escape with wet hair and every limb shaking. The bullet is not run, the blade not forged, the man not born; even the winged words of truth drop at your feet like lumps of

> lead. *You require for such a desperate encounter an enchanted and poisoned shaft dipped in a lie too subtle to be found on earth.* (192, emphasis added).

In this expression of hopelessness, Marlow compares his efforts to quell Jewel's fear to a tackle with 'a spectre'. The spectral metaphor alludes to the abstract nature of fear, and therefore, to the difficulty of confronting it. Moreover, it also foreshadows my discussion of spectrality in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*, where I demonstrate how the protagonist, Razumov, is Othered by being progressively stripped of his humanity. Through this form of Othering, he is consistently compared to a ghost or linked to notions and images of spectrality. In *Lord Jim*, we observe that Jim gradually undergoes such a form of Othering through references to spectrality made in connection to him. Marlow's reference here to the spectre obviously connotes Jewel's fear that he is unable to assuage. However, knowing what Marlow knows of Jim which he is unable to reveal to Jewel, we realise that the spectre here also very much alludes to the truth about Jim's past, to the secret of his shameful cowardice and his constant fear of failure that persistently haunt him. If Jim is a haunted man, he is haunted by the ghost of his past failures that resides prominently in his mind and that determines all his actions. This spectre, Marlow is unable to suppress in Jim since he can only imagine it whereas it remains vividly real for Jim. Consequently, it remains the one thing about Jim that defies Marlow's intervention. Thus, when Cornelius, for his own selfish reasons, tries to appeal to him to take Jim away from Patusan, Marlow recalls the sense of hopelessness that he feels in the previous incident with Jewel and he states, "I don't know whether it was the demoralisation of my utter defeat in my encounter with a spectre of fear less than an hour ago, but I let him capture me without even a show of resistance." (197). By the end of Marlow's narrative, Jim is overcome by the spectre so that, in his death, he fades out of existence and takes on a shadowy quality that casts him in the aspect of spectrality.

Instances of other encounters that contribute to the Othering of Jim include those directly related to the fated Patna in connection with which I mention two associations. There are first the "eight hundred pilgrims" (9) aboard the ship. In reference to them, the German skipper remarks, "[l]ook at dese cattle" (10), immediately transforming them from an image of persons to one of animals – cattle – "driven on board" (9) the ship. Being chief mate of the ship and also being the only one among the ship crew who seemed at all concerned about the fate of the pilgrims, it is interesting to note that Jim's association to "dese cattle" carries beyond the fact that he is also

animalised as a "bull" (3) or "bullock" (44, …) to instances where this imagery is extended to his environment when, later on in the narrative, he settles down in Patusan. There, he feels that he has earned the trust of the people who consider him their protector and, while narrating this to Marlow, he surveys "the houses crowding along the wide shining sweep" which "were like *a spectral herd of shapeless creatures pressing forward to drink in a spectral and lifeless stream*. (151, emphasis mine). The motif of spectrality recurring here, and accompanied by the suggestion of 'shapeless' forms and a 'lifeless stream' educes the dreamlike nature of the Patusan universe. In this metonymic reference to the people of Patusan through a focus on their houses, it is worth noting that the house in which Jim lives is also among these settlements. Therefore, if, by inference, the people are like "a spectral herd", then that herd – a term which invariably evokes the image of cattle – includes Jim, who is also captured in the spectral nature that qualifies them. Besides, with the extended meaning of herd also referent to a herdsman or a keeper of a herd it is interesting to remark that a few paragraphs later Marlow states that "[Jim] looked with an owner's eye […] at the river, at the houses, at the […] forest […] but it was they that possessed him and made him their own…" (152). Thus, he is at once one of them as well as their keeper – a fact which Marlow stresses in his observation that "all [the] things that made him master had made him a captive, too" (152). In this sense he is portrayed as captured in a state of hybridity in which he is at once "one of us" but also one of them.

MAPPING THE OTHER

In thinking about Jim as an Other in relation to place and time, I defer to the assertion made by Alison Mountz (2009) that "[i]n geographical terms to other means to locate a person […] outside of the centre, on the margins" (328). On the premise of this notion, I further my argument that Jim is consistently represented as an Other by the evidence of his steady retreat from the maritime centre and into the margins. Moreover, I argue that as we go through Marlow's narrative, we would realise that Jim is consistently placed in spaces or situations that suggest his marginalisation, and thereby also indicate his Othering through such marginalisation. Throughout my discussion, I have regularly made reference to Jim's retreat to his out-of-the-way hide-out in Patusan. While this stands out as the most obvious indication of him gradually relocating into a marginal space, it only reflects one way in which he is Othered geographically. To demonstrate other ways in which he

undergoes this form of Othering, I point to the fact that in the other ports to which he flees from the shame of the Patna Affair, he is excluded (as per the verdict of his trial) from the very centre of maritime activity, meaning that he is unable to hold any position within the command of a ship. Rather, he is relegated to working in an obsequious position as a "ship-chandler's water-clerk" (3) who is not required to "pass an examination in anything under the sun" (3). This suggestion of a base position requiring no professional qualifications casts Jim in the light of a servant. Besides, the fact that he is unable to go to sea and remains in the ports to render services to docking vessels consolidates the notion that he is marginalised from actual maritime activity. Therefore, in terms of the naval centre-stage, Jim is located on the margins (that is in the ports) outside of the maritime centre (the sea). These combined situations of servility and marginalisation, indicating a debasement of status, contribute to Jim's construction as an Other.

The fact that Marlow finds it necessary to specify details, (such as qualification and function), of Jim's debased state draws the reader's attention to the Othering act performed through Marlow's narration. That this performance evokes a differentiation between central and marginal spaces suggests that space plays an essential role in such an act of Othering. Thus, with regard to Jim, we get a sense in which his Othering is mapped out through space as he literally wanders about in circles, moving from one seaport to another in an effort to run away from places tinged by the slightest knowledge of his shameful involvement with the *Patna*. Nevertheless, Marlow points out that, despite how far Jim retreated, "the fact followed him casually but inevitably" (3) and that he "became known as a rolling stone, because […] after a time [he had] become perfectly known, and even notorious, within the circle of his wanderings" (119). The motif of wandering flight implied here in Jim's peripatetic movements extends from Marlow's description, very early in the narrative, of the state of Jim's mind as he testifies in court during the hearing of the *Patna* case. In relation to this, we learn that as he recounts the details of the case in court "his mind positively flew round and round the serried circle of facts that had surged up all about him to cut him off from the rest of his kind" (19). This early allusion to Jim's agitated psychological state that threatens to exclude him from 'his kind', is further emphasised through the comparison of him to "a creature that, finding itself imprisoned within an enclosure of high stakes, dashes round and round, distracted in the night, trying to find a weak spot, a crevice, a place to scale, some opening through which it may squeeze itself and escape" (19). This comparison evokes images of entrapment within a confined space defined by 'high stakes' from which it is difficult to escape.

And, throughout the rest of Marlow's narration, this metaphor of entrapment is constantly associated with Jim who remains trapped in his fantasies of himself as by the fact of his failure. As he flees in self-exile from this fact, he becomes 'cut off' from 'his kind'. By 'his kind', it is evident that Marlow implies the astute European, who bears "an unobscured vision, a tenacity of purpose, [and] a touch of altruism" (160). Jim, however, has his vision obscured by his lofty fantasies and he bears "a sort of sublimated, idealised selfishness" (108) as a result of which he tries to prove himself to the world.

Jim's strife for fame linked to his fantasised conquests evokes the notion of imperial power over conquered territory. For, in many ways, this is what he achieves in the dreamlike Patusan where he becomes lord over the people through his demonstration of conquering might and superiority over belligerent tribal factions competing with one other for economic and political power. Aligning himself with the dominant tribe in Patusan, Jim quickly wins their affection because he succeeds in chasing the rival tribe out into the forests and, so, restores calm to the area. From Marlow's narration, we get the impression that Jim seems to have achieved such success because as a "white man", his "racial prestige and the reputation of invincible, supernatural power" (220) assure him of "unfailing victory" (220). It is also probably due to the fact that he can be racially identified through this whiteness that Marlow unwaveringly insists on his inclusion in the ranks of privilege which signifies the 'us' group as opposed to the natives in Patusan who are identified as brown and grouped as 'them'. Such a correlation between whiteness and privilege, which Marlow subtly alludes to in the narrative, and which is also suggestive of racial superiority, is accentuated in the notion that Jim was "quite superior" (120) and also in the assertion that Dain Waris, the chief's son and a native, "knew how to fight like a white man" (160). Such a comparison of Dain Waris' martial skills to that of a white man sets Europeans as the standard against which others are evaluated, thereby resonating the master discourse of imperial narratives. Besides, the fact that, despite Dain Waris' ability, Jim, a foreigner, should become the military leader of the people in Patusan reinforces the imperial notion of Western superiority. In effect, it becomes evident that, among his own kind, Jim is Othered as a result of his inability to live up to the expected standard of courage. However, when, through Marlow's intervention, he relocates to Patusan, he excels among the natives due to his superiority as a European. This reveals how, in Conrad's text, the link between place and subjectivity is perpetuated through what Derek Gregory refers to as "geography's complicity […] in the wider cultures of imperialism" (447). For, through

Marlow's subtle undertones, we inadvertently become aware of the consolidation of Jim's Otherness through his association to "the land, [and] the people" (160) of Patusan. As he exults in the realisation of his heroic fantasies in the dreamy land and among the natives who were "like people in a book" (159), he equally takes on a fictionalised identity that cuts him off from reality, casting him into a dream-like existence in that Patusan. Besides, the fact that this second half of the narrative, which presents Jim's conquests in Patusan, is recounted through explicit references to darkness calls attention to his progressive obfuscation, leading to his mystification. This mystifying act is further reinforced by the story's appeal to the imagination.

It is interesting to note that while Conrad sets his narrative in imaginative places in the Pacific coast, he simultaneously attempts to credibly map these sites onto the real territory. In this manner, he succeeds in creating a factionalised geographical space which aligns very much with his own notions of geographical epochs as expounded in his essay 'Geography and Some Explorers'. In this essay, he delineates three phases of geography that contribute to the establishment of imperialism. The first phase is that of Geography Fabulous which connotes the "phase of circumstantially extravagant speculation" (3). He states that during this period, ideas of existing territories were formed through a navigation of the seas. As Conrad points out, this phase, marked by fantasies of unexplored territories, gave rise to the imperial quest to discover geographical spaces that were at the time only imagined. This then led up to the second phase of Geography Militant which marks the exploration of imagined lands by such adventurers as Captain Cook. This second phase provided empirical knowledge about unexplored geographical regions. However, it also further fuelled the desire for more scientific knowledge about the farthest reaches of other continents. As knowledge increased and fantasy yielded to discovery, Geography Militant turned into Geography Triumphant, characterised by the total subjugation of explored territory to imperial conquest. As part of this conquest, the imperial agent, styled also as the explorer, invariably imposed on the new territory his ideas of other known geographical spaces. Thus, the description of the discovered spaces is always predicated upon the knowledge of earlier spaces, thereby resulting in an Othering of the new spaces with respect to those that are already known. In *Lord Jim*, Conrad appears to stage these phases of geographical exploits through the conceptualisation of space with regard to Jim. As he transposes the imagined territory of his narrative onto the real landscape, he transcends from the first epoch of Geography Fabulous to the second of Geography Militant, aiming at achieving the final epoch of Geography Triumphant

through an appeal to the fertile imaginations of his listeners/ readers. The materialisation of this last epoch is evidenced by the vraisemblance of the various settings in which Jim is located and by the fact that it is possible to imagine his story as occurring anywhere within the nautical reaches of the Eastern colonial empire. It is against such a notion of geographical conquest initiated from the Imperial centre and outwards to its margins that the duality of us and them, that Marlow often alludes to, is set. However, the possibility of interterritorial spaces located anywhere within the interstices of Conrad's imagined world overthrows this duality, and fixes Jim as an Other captured within a third space. To further this argument, I draw on Steve Pile's interpretation of Bhabha's third space as a "space which avoids the politics of polarity and enables the construction of new radical allegiances" (271). Thus, in my conceptualisation of Jim as an Other with regard to space, I assert that, in Bhabha's terms, he falls into "the hybridised spaces of shifting demographies produced by […] 'wandering people who… are themselves the marks of shifting boundaries'" (Bhabha, 315).

In effect, from Marlow's narration, we observe that Jim first imagines his heroic self as emerging through sea-faring adventures. He, however, comes to a quick realisation of the falsehood of such an imagination when he finds himself faced with a real-life challenge that causes him to remain on land where he explores other possibilities for self-affirmation. As that also proves futile, he retreats to Patusan where his achievements, short-lived as they may be, consolidate his imagined idea of himself. It is worth noting that Jim's geographical trajectory runs parallel to his self-construction, thus drawing a correlation between the spaces of the narrative and the phases of Jim's self-evolution. As we observe the real nature of Jim, we also identify him in 'real' places within the universe of the text. But as he withdraws into his imagined world to live out his heroic fantasies, we observe that the geographical location of Patusan is fantasised even in the text, so that we get the impression of it being a sort of dreamland. Through this stylistic technique of juxtaposing the geographical aspects of the text with the representation of his protagonist, Conrad ends up rendering Jim as more imaginary than real as he seems to have "passed away out of existence" as he finally dies in Patusan which Marlow describes as "one of the lost, forgotten, unknown places of the earth" that could easily "slip out of existence" (196).

CHAPTER THREE

CONTESTING OTHERNESS: *UNDER WESTERN EYES*

Joseph Conrad's novel, *Under Western Eyes,* is arguably the work in which aspects of the author's personal life are most camouflaged. These aspects comprise his historical heritage which encompasses a past marked by the duality of identity – as a Polish born under Russian occupation – and a present haunted by the emergence of his personality as a multiplicity of an incongruently fused subjecthood – Polish/ Russian/ British; sailor/writer – that he constantly strove to reconcile. Thus, the novel can be read as the author's self-reflexive attempt to sift through such a multiplicity of identities in order to construct his own conscious sense of self. In this effort, I opine that the writer projects himself and those disquieting aspects of his history onto the character and the narrative of his novel in a manner that, panoramic in perspective, allows him, as well as his readers, a certain distance of critical objectivity. From this position, therefore, I propose that, in line with Conrad's own words from his autobiographical treatise, *A Personal Record*, the writer, in an indirect way, "lives in his work" as "the only reality in an invented world, among imaginary things, happenings, and people" (4).

Even though in alluding to the imaginary the author establishes the fictionality of his works, the fact that certain incidents in his text can be substantiated as corresponding to actual historical events lend weight to the argument that the invented world of his *Under Western Eyes* is, in context and form, a palimpsest of the real. Extending from this notion, the conscientious critic may well agree with Conrad that when he, as the author, constructs and scripts his invented world, "he is only writing about himself" (*A Personal Record* 4). In a further reflection on this phenomenon of the writer's presence in his work, Conrad affirms that he "stands confessed in his works" (*Record* 155). However, to this admission of self-disclosure in his writing, he quickly contends that "the disclosure is not complete" (*Record* 4). As David Smith observes, a reading of his works, and especially of *Under Western Eyes*, reveals that he desperately tries to distance himself from the imaginary world of his text by attempting just such an "incomplete disclosure" (41). This attitude of standing only partly confessed, of offering to disclose or to show and then partly holding back, results in an ambivalence of perception that thematically colours his writing. It also marks the amount of distance that the author imposes between himself and his reader, a distance occupied by the tortuous nature of the invented world constructed in his text. Thus, in his deployment of this

ambivalent style of exposition, it then becomes obvious that the author's efforts at self-detachment are staged to ensure that, in the novel, he "remains, to a certain extent, a figure behind a veil; a suspected rather than a seen presence – a movement and a voice behind the draperies of fiction" (*Record* 12).

This certainly leaves the reader with the uncanny notion of a certain amount of inscrutability in his works, which, Smith affirms, "is a central element in Conrad's voice" (Smith 41). Notwithstanding this inscrutability, critical scholarship by Smith, William Blackburn, Keith Carabine, Paul Eggert, and Josiane Paccaud-Huguet, among others, has shown that Conrad's personal engagement with his writing inadvertently reveals more than he would probably ordinarily disclose. It is on the basis of such reasoning that *Under Western Eyes* has been cited as the most autobiographical of all his works because of the intensity with which he personally engages with the narrative and especially with the characterisation of his protagonist, Kyrilo Sidorovitch Razumov (Smith 40). It is, after all, the text on which he lingered the longest in its writing and has been recorded as the one after the writing of which he suffered a major "complete nervous breakdown" (Blackburn 192). Besides, his writing of this novel was plagued by intermittent hiatuses; and the text itself is replete with expressions of his personal views on issues from his past and his responses to criticism and pressure on him, associated with his writing (Carabine 6).

Following from such propositions of Conrad's presence in his text, even if only partly disclosed; and of his struggles at self-effacement by resorting to a strategy of representational ambivalence creating inscrutability, I examine, in this chapter, Conrad's characteristic style of distancing through his use of techniques that I identify as Othering modes of representation. I propose that in *Under Western Eyes*, he depicts such Othering through the techniques of disembodiment and doubling, primarily enhanced by the overarching deployment of spectrality. For my exploration of these forms of Othering in this novel, I draw on Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny, Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology and on Homi Bhabha's discussion of the ambivalent and hybrid condition of the Other, among other theoretical approaches. In my analysis I aim to show that while Conrad captures his characters in terms of alterity through the manner in which he characterises them, the agentic qualities that he ascribes to them depicts a subtle resistance to their representation as Others under the oppressive system of imperialism into which they cast, both literally and in socio-political terms.

Much research literature on the novel draws intertextual links between *Under Western Eyes* (published in 1911) and the work of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881). The notion that Conrad's novel is in many ways a response to Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is predominant in this critical tradition. However, Paul Kirschner argues beyond the influence of this single text and asserts that Dostoevsky's *A Raw Youth* also strongly influences Conrad's novel (Kirschner 178-179). Acknowledging the validity of this claim, Jeremy Hawthorn takes this argument even further and points out that, at the textual level, an even more compelling case for intertextuality could be drawn from Dostoevsky's "The Double" (Hawthorn 44). In corroboration of Hawthorn's claim, an example of "The Double" as intertext for Conrad's novel is cited by Carola M. Kaplan in her discussion of "Conrad's Narrative Occupation of/by Russia in *Under Western Eyes*". Such persistent critical debate illuminates the fact that even though the similarities between Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Razumov in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* cannot be ignored, evidence put forth by other critical examinations of Conrad's novel attest to the fact that combined influences from other works of Dostoevsky can equally be detected in *Under Western Eyes*, which among Conrad's writings stands out exclusively as the only work in which he deals with his historical, and rather pained, connections to Russia. These parallels between Conrad and Dostoesvsky are significant because Conrad had declared himself opposed to Dostoevsky's dogmatism on the necessity and value of suffering, through a Christian messianic model, which he (Dostoevsky) insisted, through his writings, was the very foundation of Russian nationalism. In this affirmation of a nationalism founded primarily on his claims to what Carabine has described as "the spiritual leadership of the Slav world" (Carabine, *The Life and the Art*, 80), Dostoevsky defended his ideology through a hateful segregationist caution against Poles whom he branded as threats to the Russian 'soul' due to their "'typical exclusiveness' and […] 'national and social aloofness'" (Waclaw Lednicki 277 cited in Carabine 77). As Richard Curle observes, such hateful sentiments expressed against the Polish resulted in the fact that "[t]here was no name in literature that Conrad detested more than that of Dostoevsky, and usually the mere mention of the name drove him into a fury" (14). Therefore, as earlier scholars have shown, Conrad expressed his hatred for Dostoevsky by attempting to distance himself from the great Russian nationalist writer (Carabine 80). In this distancing effort, he insists, in a letter to Robert Garnett, that Dostoevsky is "too Russian for me" (Conrad, *Letters*, 240). Much research has, however, revealed that his distancing efforts proved unsuccessful as many critics have

demonstrated an abiding literary and ideological entanglement between the two writers. In effect, the more Conrad claims a dislike for his Russian predecessor, the more tenable it is to detect Dostoevsky's unshakeable influence over him; or, at least, to discern a somewhat indirect influence in the form of what Jeffrey Berman has called "Conrad's intense unconscious identification with the hated Russian novelist" (Berman 6).

In a further consideration of intertextuality in *Under Western Eyes*, research has shown that besides the compelling arguments of a strong, even if unconscious, influence of Dostoevsky on this novel, snippets from Conrad's own writing, especially from his short story "The Secret Sharer", are also present in the novel. As Carabine points out, this may be accounted for by the fact that during the writing of *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad paused to write "The Secret Sharer" from start to finish before continuing with the novel. As a result, the motif of doubling which he primarily deploys in the short story is repeated in the novel; and so also are the themes of murder, confession, and trust, albeit with different outcomes in the individual texts. In relation to this, Hawthorn, examining this intertextuality in Conrad's novel, draws on Lévi-Strauss's concept of *bricolage* and insists that "tracing sources is different from establishing functions", and so borrowings from another writer or tradition can be used to achieve completely different roles in different texts (Hawthorn 39). It is in this way that, like many of his other writings, *Under Western Eyes* affirms Conrad's genius in unifying all of the intertextual elements into a refreshingly different narrative.

As a result of such intertextuality, even between his own works, I argue that Conrad, as in his other works, conforms to a formulaic pattern of Othering to phenomenologically explore the existentialism of his subjects. In line with this pattern, his main character in *Under Western Eyes*, Razumov is Othered through a form of disembodiment that is hinged on the haunting spectrality and phantomisation of Haldin, who is revealed to be Razumov's double. This portentous combination of the haunt and the double evokes Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny as "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and familiar" (220). In further exposition of this notion, Freud emphasises that "this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated only through the process of repression" (241). In his discourse on this 'uncanny' phenomenon, rendered from the original term *unheimlich*, Freud cites several examples that point to that which

is not only oddly familiar yet frightening but which also has a double effect upon the subject. In his discussion, he infers that this uncanniness can in actual fact create such a doubling effect in relation to "things, persons, impressions, events and situations" (226) that one is almost never entirely certain about the clear boundaries between reality and imagination. From this perspective of the double and its relation to the uncanny, a close reading of Conrad's works will reveal a heavy reliance on this dual trope consisting of both the double/doppelganger and the uncanny, to varying degrees, across all of his writing.

Thus, even though the motif of the double as in *The Secret Agent* (published in 1907) and then in "The Secret Sharer" (published in 1910) recurs here, albeit somewhat differently, Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* is arguably the novel in which he most extensively combines this trope with the metaphor of the spectre throughout his writing to explore his ever-decisive theme of betrayal with its concomitant need for confession, justification or a striving to be understood. In this way, Conrad demonstrates a deep and persistent concern with the individual's betrayal of what may be seen as universal human values, resulting in a violation of that subject's humanity. Although my overarching argument in this project is to point out that in many of Conrad's works it is possible to detect an Other (usually male) who is peculiarly characterised in specific ways that distinguish him from given social norms or standards suggested in the narrative, I demonstrate in this discussion that *Under Western Eyes* also depicts forms of subversion, expressed mainly through denial and self-assertion, that hint at a contestation of the epistemic violence that Othering inflicts on subaltern subjects.

Very early in the narrative, we are introduced to Razumov, "a very promising student" (14) of St. Petersburg University who, by his intelligent, quiet and amiable nature, inspires trust in his colleagues. Living in Russia "in a period of mental and political unrest" (16), he has an acute sense of the "emotional tension of his time" (17) and tries to avoid getting entangled in it by concerning himself mainly with his personal development towards his future. However, his aspirations and diligent self-application are wrecked by Victor Haldin, a fellow student with revolutionary ideas. The main event around which the plot of *Under Western Eyes* revolves is the assassination of a much disliked Minister of State on a busy street in the city of St. Petersburg. Having commited this political crime as a "necessity" (27), Victor Haldin seeks refuge in the rooms of Razumov who he believes shares similar philosophical and revolutionary convictions and from whom he hopes

to receive sympathy and help. Out of trust, he confesses to Razumov his involvement in the assassination and solicits his help, requesting that Razumov find Ziemianitch, who would help him (Haldin) escape. Faced with the dread of becoming associated with Haldin and his crime, Razumov goes out to look for Ziemianitch, if only to get rid of Haldin. When he locates Ziemianitch, the latter is hopelessly drunk and Razumov beats him severely out of frustration. With a deep sense of the threat posed to him by Haldin's imposition of his situation on him, Razumov becomes acutely aware of his social isolation and his lack of family relations. In an unconscious attempt towards self-preservation, he decides to betray Haldin to the authorities, and does so secretly, quite contrary to Haldin's expectations. Consequently, Haldin is arrested, interrogated and executed. However, far from feeling relieved that he has done the right thing, Razumov is ridden with guilt and finds it difficult to get back to his normal life. Moreover, he is perceived as a possible accomplice who is secretly revered by the revolutionaries while being carefully watched by the authorities.

As a result of his act of betrayal, Conrad's embattled protagonist, is trapped, throughout the remainder of the novel, in a haunting narrative of guilt, introspection, remorse and the pressing desire to unburden himself of the cowardly act of living with falsehood. Through the reflective recounting of the narrator, Conrad affirms that Razumov's struggle with the morality of his actions is representative of the "moral corruption of an oppressed society" (UWE, 14). It is from this analysis that I assert that, in keeping with his predominant style of launching an enquiry into the motives behind human actions through his characters, Conrad signals the ambiguity of his mission by typically resorting to the technique of distancing through the creation of an Other. In *Under Western Eyes*, this Other is captured predominantly but not entirely in the character of Razumov, through whom he critically examines the subject's ability for personal and social integration. It is also through this Other that Conrad, doubling as the narrator, invites, prompts and even provokes his readers to assess and judge the actions, convictions and personalities of his characters. As I may have earlier implied, Conrad's deployment of the Othering techniques of disembodiment and doubling enable him to establish a distance of critical objectivity between the reader and the text. In addition to this, his use of the technique of spectrality leads to the obfuscation of the Other, causing an ambivalence in the specificity of that Other. In effect, there occurs, in this novel, a constant shifting of the identity of the Other, a phenomenon which makes it almost impossible to pin the condition of Otherness on any one character, and especially not determinately on the protagonist, Razumov. Thus, although, to a large extent, the Other is often associated with

Razumov, directly as a primary subject and indirectly as the other half of a double construct consisting of himself and Haldin; at other times we identify the Other in relation to other characters, including Peter Ivanovitch, the "heroic fugitive" (110) and "a revolutionary feminist" (115) who is considered a "great man" (174) and the leader of the revolutionists in Geneva; Madame de S— known also as Eleanor Maximovna, the "Egeria of Peter Ivanovitch"; and Tekla, the maltreated and disillusioned servant of Madame de S—. A few more characters that we can identify as Others in the novel are Julius Laspara, the Geneva-based pamphleteer of the revolutionists; Sophia Antanovna, the "woman revolutionist" (207); Nikita, "surnamed Necator", the "executioner of revolutionary verdicts" (223); and Mrs Haldin, Victor Haldin's mother.

In my overall discussion of Conrad's works, such an exploration of the Other is important as it demonstrates that the writer's portrayal of alterity is really a function of his preoccupation with identity and subjectivity and does not by any stretch of the imagination represent an intentional attempt to depict Otherness simply for the sake of establishing racial, political or cultural difference. From this perspective on Conrad's construction of subjectivity, I anticipate that a consideration of the multiplicity and disparity of his Others may induce the reader to free his writings from what Haripersad Sewlall rightly describes as the "stranglehold of the Manichean paradigm in terms of which alterity or otherness is perceived" (Sewlall ii). Besides, my analysis of *Under Western Eyes* will demonstrate that Conrad's often ambivalent identification and representation of the Other makes it untenable to frame his writing within the restrictions of a Manichean binary paradigm.

ALMOST… BUT NOT QUITE

Right from the onset of the narrative, Conrad's ambivalence of representation can already be detected in the portrayal of his protagonist, Razumov. In the author's description of the character, the reader will notice a progressive blurring of Razumov's features, culminating in his being depicted as an Other. Focusing, from the start, on the character's physical qualities, Conrad draws attention to the indistinct nature of Razumov's appearance and reveals to us that he is different. Although he tardily states that he thinks that Razumov is "sufficiently good-looking" (13), his earlier description of Razumov as being "quite unusually dark for a Russian from the Central Provinces" (12) cannot escape the careful reader. Besides, he declares that:

> [Razumov's] good looks would have been unquestionable if it had not been for a peculiar lack of fineness in [his] features. […] as if a face modelled vigorously in wax (with some approach even to a classical correctness of type) had been held close to a fire till all sharpness of line had been lost in the softening of the material" (UWE 12-13).

In these depictions of the main character, Conrad first sets him apart from what he considers the usual type by making reference to his complexion which, according to him, is "unusually dark". Then, secondly he describes his features as bearing a "lack of fineness", hinting at a sort of inadequacy or defect. From this depiction of Razumov as not quite conforming to a certain mould, Conrad proceeds to progressively depersonalise him, capturing him as "a face modelled vigorously in wax". Yet still in this objectification, he states that "some approach even" is made at moulding the wax face according to "a classical correctness of type", thus underscoring his earlier insinuation of a shortfall that implies that the mould does not quite meet the standard. Further expanding upon the metaphor of wax, he then totally dehumanises the character, referring to him finally as "the material" which, upon being held close to the fire, loses "all sharpness of line" as a result of its "softening". In this subtle and almost imperceptible manner, Conrad already establishes Razumov as the Other who is close to the standard but does not quite make the mark; or from Homi Bhabha's notion of the Other, he is "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha 1994c: 86). Representing Razumov in this way as an Other by an initial focus on his complexion, and then on his features, which are captured within the boundaries of a face (used metonymically to stand for the character), right through to reducing him to an object by casting the face in a mould of wax, and then to an abstract material, Conrad transforms Razumov from human subject to material object, from self to Other. In thus breaking down the subject from whole to part, human to material, palpable to abstract, Conrad hints at a fragmentation of the subject which constitutes an incompleteness, capturing the subject in a state of Otherness that, in Lacanian terms, depicts "the […] subject [as] essentially and irrevocably fragmented and incapable of the full occupation of self" (Sexton, 621).

In juxtaposition to the description of his physical features, in this early representation of Razumov, the reader is provided with a further critical description of his personality. Conrad reveals that

> In discussion [Razumov] was easily swayed by argument and authority. With his younger compatriots he took the attitude of an inscrutable listener, a listener of the kind that hears you out intelligently and then – just changes the subject.
> This sort of trick, which may arise either from intellectual insufficiency or from an imperfect trust in one's own convictions, procured for Mr. Razumov a reputation of profundity. (13)

As an expansion upon the earlier description of him, Razumov's psychological disposition is laid bare in a circuitous manner that foregrounds his susceptibility. In this description, the writer portrays the character as a rather impressionable individual who masks his mental vulnerability with affected discernibility. In further reference to this attitude as "some sort of trick", Conrad moreover attributes Razumov's covert nature to the suspicion of further possible deficiencies in the form of "intellectual insufficiency" or "an imperfect trust in one's own convictions". Suggestively stating that Razumov's attitude, which bears hints of intellectual dearth, have ironically earned him "a reputation of profundity", the writer is quick to point out in a follow-up statement that in the midst of "a lot of exuberant talkers, in the habit of exhausting themselves daily by ardent discussion, a comparatively taciturn personality is naturally credited with reserve power" (13). In effect, the reader is left in little doubt about the equivocal nature of Razumov's intellectual capability. This equivocation encompasses a form of ambivalence that translates, in the persona of the character, into conflict. Summarising this correlation between his outer appearance and his inner capabilities, Carola Kaplan asserts that Razumov's "blurry physiognomy symbolizes his inner formlessness" (109). Drawing on this notion of the character's formlessness, I suggest that such an interpretation is actually intended from the introductory description of the character, and it anticipates Razumov's efforts at constructing his identity through the arduous task of firmly shaping his convictions. These convictions, however, are themselves dictated and controlled by the oppressive imperial system from which he cannot escape.

In Michel Foucault's formulation of the notion of subjecthood, he conceptualises the individual subject as an emergent entity that gains integration (on both social and political levels) on the condition of transformation determined by socio-political mechanisms and also by conformity to a specific pattern of meanings and conduct (Foucault, "Subject and Power", 132;

138). Such a configuration (of meanings and behaviour) is shaped by the very society in which the subject finds himself/herself, and in his/her subjectivity, he/she becomes simultaneously a subject of, as he/she is subjected to the political economy of his/her particular society and time (Foucault, "Subject and Power", 130). In such a conceptualisation of subjecthood, the individual is bound by expectation – socially, and politically – which gives rise to the philosophical problem of determining what one is at any particular moment (Foucault 134). In a further elaboration of this problem, Foucault points out that the method of redress is, perhaps, for the individual not to discover what he/she is but to refuse what he/she is so he/she can imagine and construct what he/she could be so as to get rid of and to liberate himself/herself from the political "'double bind,' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of [the] […] power structures" (Foucault 134).

This seems to be the sort of political double bind that Razumov finds himself caught in, and against which he is finally forced to define himself relying on that supposed "profundity" that has earned him the reputation of a "thinker" (UWE 81), and that causes others, especially Haldin, to assume that he shares their ideas of revolution against the tyrannical political system. Upon becoming involved with Haldin, Razumov, whose ambiguous nature has already been hinted at, becomes conflicted within himself. His conflict is both ethical and psychological. On an ethical level, he is beset by the overriding concern with human nature in terms of the binaries of morality; whereas on a psychological level, he struggles with the positive and adverse forces of his emotionally-driven thoughts and his appeal to rationality.

This internal conflict results in a dualism in him that smacks of hybridity. Additionally, it also results in the creation of his Otherness. In his conflicted state he needs to clarify for himself, on the one hand, what his personal convictions are and, therefore, where his true allegiances lie: with the autocrats or with the revolutionaries, the suppressive forces or the silenced majority. Yet, on the other hand, he also needs to work out his identity and heritage in terms of how he is related to the society around him and, therefore, how his experience of this state of being or belonging shapes his subjectivity within the social sphere. As he struggles through these existential issues after Haldin's imposition on him, he is, on a subconscious level, simultaneously developing his own personality away and removed from all that is familiar to him and that he has learnt to conform

to within the oppressive system. These include his dreams and his desires, all that he thinks or believes he could be supported to become if he stays on the right side of the system.

In his examination of how surveillance functions through a panopticon system to control behaviour and reinforce power, Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish* states that in the interest of maintaining discipline and order within any structure (prison, school, factory, etc) of society, a system of "hierarchized, continuous and functional surveillance" is operated by a governing body in order to ensure compliance from its subjects (Foucault, *Discipline*, 176). He further notes that under such surveillance, the subject becomes self-conscious of its conduct, so that even in the absence of active surveillance, the individual, having developed an "anxious awareness of being observed" (Foucault, *Discipline*, 202) is forced into compliance anyway as a result of a sense of passive surveillance. Thus, "real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation" (Foucault, *Discipline*, 202); and the individual "who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (*Discipline*, 202-203). Manipulated by a despotic political system into this kind of compliance, Razumov, attempts to live within the limits of a dynamic normalisation.

He desires greatness, but only along the model of greatness prescribed by the system and sanctioned by 'great' personalities he has encountered such as Prince K. The requirement of this model is education, and we learn very early on in the narrative that Razumov's "main concern" is "with his work, his studies, and with his own future" (17). He has diligently prepared for examinations and is preparing to write a prize essay with the aim of winning a coveted silver medal. This aspiration to be considered qualified evokes also the Foucauldian notion that "examination combines the technique of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish" (*Discipline*, 184). Guided by these formalities of the normalising gaze of such a "domination-observation" (Foucault, *Discipline*, 305) despotic government, Razumov is unconsciously cowed into submitting to the system and its prescribed modes for self-development. Thus, for him, the encounter with Haldin becomes an encounter with the dreaded Other, an encounter marked by repulsion and scorn. Razumov thus locates the Other as external to himself.

In effect, what he does is to enact a resistance performance through the externalisation of his Otherness, and thus to attempt a separation of that Otherness from himself.

However, since he is himself irrevocably Other, his repudiation of identification with Haldin culminates in the effect that the representation of that Otherness manifests as an "internal and unchangeable condition" (Sexton, 621) of his existence. Further drawing on Sexton's summation of alterity, I suggest that, resulting from his inability to separate the Other from himself, for Razumov, "the Other is thus basically a locus of forces which enables the emergence of the subject but, at the same time, leaves the subject permanently fragmented and in perpetual slavery to desire" (Sexton, 621). Following from Sexton's analysis, we could infer that Haldin only becomes a correlative for Razumov's lack and helps to affirm his lack of complete selfhood or subjectivity. In effect, Razumov is caught in a contorted performance of resistance and self-assertion in which he repudiates and yet affirms the Other, which is at once himself and also outside of himself. From the general notion of the concept of resistance performance as a form of subversive representation, Marvin Carlson points out that such a form of expression functions as a mode of asserting one's subjectivity. From this premise he states that in order to represent oneself differently from how one has been socially coded, it becomes necessary to use some "strategy suggested by de Certeau's 'tactics,' which he sees as activities: that 'belong to the other,' outside the institutionalized space of 'proper' activity" (Carlson, 309). In effect, Carlson asserts that the "central concern of resistant performance arises from the dangerous game it plays as a double-agent […] [as] complicity and subversion are inextricably intertwined" (310).

In the analysis of Razumov's 'tactics', we may perceive such a concern for precariousness. For, in his sustained effort to disconnect himself from Haldin, not only does he physically get caught in the dangerous role of a double-agent, but he is also both ethically and psychologically tormented in the performance of this role. This derives from the fact that at the level of the conscious as well as of the subconscious he struggles to deny the Other, which is also himself, even though he remains undeniably aware of its existence. As a result, in his doubling act, he becomes invariably complicit in the existence of the Other, enabling it, enacting it, and embodying it, even while he strives to subvert it. In other words, he is performing or 'doing' the Other while yet trying to 'undo' it.

Furthermore, the reader perceives in the encounter between Haldin and Razumov, the meeting of Razumov with his double. For Haldin is himself an Other, representing the suppressed subject and embodying the violent rage of the "disarticulated subaltern" (Parry, 45) against the repressive autocratic power apparatus. In relation to Razumov, Haldin represents the converse image of the same mould of the Other into which Razumov is cast. Where Razumov is the conforming Other of the system, Haldin is the militant Other. After he has learnt about Haldin's crime and goes out ostensibly to help to arrange an escape plan for him, Razumov, even while trying to convince himself that the right thing to do is to give Haldin up to the authorities, still pairs himself with Haldin as he contemplates: "What is this Haldin? And what am I? Only two grains of sand. But a great mountain is made up of just such insignificant grains. […] Do I want his death? No! I would save him if I could – but no one can do that – he is the withered member which must be cut off" (37).

Symbolising himself and Haldin as two insignificant grains of sand in the metaphorical mountain of the suppressed population, Razumov identifies himself on the same side of the power divide as Haldin. In a further metaphorical representation that conjures the biblical allusion of the pruning of the withered branches of a vine, he refers to Haldin as the "withered member" that "must be cut off", with the implication that he is himself a healthy branch and must not be destroyed for Haldin's crime. In connection to this he declares: "If I must perish through him, let me at least not perish with him, and associated against my will with his sombre folly that understands nothing either of men or things" (37). Consequently, upon persuading himself that he is doing the right thing, Razumov resolves to betray Haldin based on his belief in the system, on his personal convictions and in what he considers to be his "superior" ability to reason (37).

In his rational assessment of this decision, he affirms that there are problems with the system: "Despotic bureaucracy… abuses… corruption" (37). However, he also asserts that, in spite of these, "absolute power should be preserved – the tool ready for the man – for the great autocrat of the future" (37). Therefore, to a large extent, it is this belief in the preservation of absolute power and in autocracy that pushes him to betray Haldin. In this respect, he is hardly very different from Haldin, or from the other revolutionaries, in his nationalistic expressions or aspirations, as it becomes evident that deeply ingrained in the national psyche of all the Russians presented in the novel is a political esteem for autocratic rule. In a similar observation of the prevalence of such

despotic sentiments among the Russians within the narrative, Kaplan states: "Russia's revolutionaries cannot conceive of a true alternative to autocracy. Each cherishes a conception of Russia's future that is in fact but a variant of a despotic regime. […]. Even Razumov, loyalist and anti-revolutionary, when threatened by the imminent loss of his freedom, longs for a despot" (109).

Thus, even though he is as dogmatic in his thinking as is Haldin, in his contemplation, Razumov weighs the corruption of the system against the crime of the individual and decides to embrace the system rather than to be associated in any way with the oppressed radical. He also believes in upholding the system because he believes that with diligence he could himself someday become a part of that system as "a celebrated old professor, decorated, possibly a Privy Councillor, one of the glories of Russia" (19). Thus, in choosing the system over the individual, he submits to the system. He submits not because he supports the suppression of the poor masses that the domination of power prescribes. But rather, he submits because he unconsciously locates himself in an interstice between servant and despot where he finds that, for many others like himself, it is easier to assume the role/s scripted for him by the system than to attempt to sever himself from a structure, organised though oppressive, that has traditionally provided him with direction and value, and that feeds his future fantasies with promise.

He, therefore, performs an enactment of compliance to the system through a mental deliberation with himself, a deliberation which approximates an act of orality which itself is overdetermined in the act of being remembered and recorded in the written account of his diary. Nonetheless, it becomes obvious that in his performativity as the compliant social being within a repressive social symbolic order, Razumov, in Lacanian terms, perceives himself "as a stable form but [he] does so only by means of an image which is not truly identical with [himself] but [is] other and alien" (Sexton 621). In this sense, he constructs a self-image that is "structured by misidentification" (Sexton 621). According to Lacan, all subjects are split as a result of misidentifications and illusions of an imaginary identity. From this perspective, Razumov, constructs an image of his future self through the desire to gain the admiration of Prince K—'s legitimate family.

However this desire is really the desire for legitimisation from Prince K—, his natural father, who has failed to acknowledge him as his son. Since his desire for future greatness is tied to his subconscious desire for legitimisation, what he constructs as that future self remains only an

illusion based on the fact that, on a social and biographical level, his relationship to his biological father is never legitimised. He constantly lives with the fact of being the verboten Other of his patrilineal line. Therefore, in identifying with the fantastic images of his potential future self, presented to him by the system through images such as those of his illegitimating father, turned benefactor, Prince K—; and in choosing the system over the individual, based on his fantasised possibilities for self-actualisation, Razumov also loses his own individuality through his submission to the system.

Clearly, at the time of becoming implicated in Haldin's problems, Razumov is aware that, socially, he is located on the same side of disadvantage as Haldin. He is conscious of the fact that his future depends indeterminately on a set of possibilities, or perhaps he is unconsciously aware of this. So, what motivates him to give Haldin up? It is not an overbearing moral sense of the viciousness of Haldin's act of assassination: he does not appear to care much about that. But Razumov thinks of himself, of his self-preservation above all else. He is anxious to make sure that he is in no way associated with Haldin's act. Nevertheless, however much he tries to disentangle himself from Haldin and his crime, he ends up only becoming more embedded and wrapped up in the intrigue of it. By giving Haldin up, Razumov thinks he may be able to resolve his conflict between allegiance and self-preservation, (and also, to a large extent, self-actualisation or even subjectivity). It is for this reason that the conflict he experiences takes on both ethical and psychological dimensions. Ethical because, in relation to the social bond he shares with Haldin, it expresses a dualism in terms of good and evil, right or wrong; and psychological in that it expresses a dualism in terms of reason and emotion of the conscious or unconscious. Thus, in his split self he is plagued by an ambivalence of identification resulting from antithetical principles.

THE THINKING REED

Razumov identifies Haldin as an Other especially because he perceives him as the non-conforming subject of autocratic rule. On the other hand, even though he is himself the non-legitimised subject of patriarchal order, in his own need to conform, he strives to identify more with the power apparatus and thus with his idea of the dominant self, constructed through his fantasised future self-image within the oppressive system. As a result, he fails to consciously see his own Otherness and projects this Otherness onto Victor Haldin who represents for him all that he repudiates and

wishes to dissociate from. Thus, the identity of the Other shifts onto Haldin who, for us, becomes twice Othered in this respect because he represents the Other of the Othered subject, Razumov. An essential element that contributes to his perception of Haldin as Other, is the fact that Razumov deems himself superior in intellect and in morality to Haldin and also to most of the other characters he encounters. Despite the narrator's earlier description of him which hints at intellectual dearth, Razumov, until the very end when he confesses his betrayal to Natalia, Haldin's sister, thinks of himself as "an intellectual worker" (291) and superior in his thinking. We gather from the narrator's perspective that when, at his inquisition before Councillor Gregor Mikulin, Razumov felt terrified by the suspicion that he is being interrogated as a suspected accomplice to Haldin, the "renewed sense of his intellectual superiority sustained him in the hour of danger" (80).

In his appeal against that "danger" of being yoked together with Haldin in the senseless crime of murder, he declares: "I know I am but a reed. But I beg you to allow me the superiority of the thinking reed over the unthinking forces that are about to crush him out of existence" (80). In this evocation of Blaise Pascal's thoughts on the nobility of man as a thinking reed (347), Razumov insists that he be separated from the recklessness of "unthinking forces" by reason of his ability to engage in "[p]ractical thinking" (80). Besides, the evocation also alludes to the notions of social and biological determination which influence the actions of political or naturalist forces fashioned by the despotic nature of the system. In the character's reference to himself as the 'thinking reed', it is clear that, in his estimation, he perceives of his purported thinking ability as a mark of his "inscrutable superiority" (234). In fact, as the reader will discover, Razumov's notion of his own superiority is not only revealed through such instances of his perception of himself or the narrator's depictions of him, but it is also indicated through his interactions with other characters. Right from the onset of the events that set the narrative in motion, Haldin, in his confession to Razumov about his involvement in the assassination of Mr. de P—, declares that he reverted to Razumov for help because he trusted him, and also because he was the "last person that could be suspected" (23) if he (Haldin) got caught.

Yet the reader can quickly discern that an additional reason, perhaps unconscious though, for which Haldin seeks Razumov out is his need for mental catharsis, which he is invariably denied. In his subconscious appeal to Razumov to be heard out, he states: "speaking to a superior mind like yours I can well say all the truth" (23). On the one hand, this statement may arguably just be

a ruse of flattery to get Razumov to take him in – in which case it evidently worked. On the other hand, ingratiating as his statement may be, in his assertion of Razumov as bearing a "superior mind", Haldin symmetrically distinguishes himself as one of the "inferior mortals" (258) who take quick recourse to revolt rather than to reason. From this rather sycophantic stance, he further asserts Razumov's superiority as he declares:

> Some day you shall help to build. You suppose that I am a terrorist, now – a destructor of what is. But consider that the true destroyers are they who destroy the spirit of progress and truth, not the avengers who merely kill the bodies of the persecutors of human dignity. Men like me are necessary to make room for self-contained, thinking men like you. Well, we have made the sacrifice of our lives, but all the same I want to escape if it can be done. It is not my life I want to save, but my power to do. (24).

In this unctuous analysis of their individual worth, Haldin, playing on the presumption of his relative inferiority, depicts himself in negative terms – 'terrorist', 'destructor', one who kills – as opposed to Razumov whom he constructs, through what may appear to be very calculated flattery, in positive terms as one who 'shall help to build', and who is a 'self-contained' and 'thinking' individual. Making it clear in this assessment that the one type needs the other, from the contrast that Haldin draws between himself and Razumov, he also hints at a complementarity between 'thinking men' and men like himself who act, without much thought, exercising their 'power to do'. Thus, he argues that this instinctive will to act is essential for creating the opportunity to build. Therefore, in his desire to get away it is this 'power to do' rather than his own life that he is eager to save. It is important to note that even while in his construction of the two seemingly different types of individuals, he highlights the dichotomy between the two, he, nonetheless, underscores the necessity of both types of men, thinking and doing, for the overall structure of power.

However, despite Haldin's rather fawning assessment of the relationship between them both, Razumov, on the other hand, rejects any such association as, in his contemplations leading to his betrayal of Haldin, he reflects: "What are the luridly smoky lucubrations of that fellow to the clear grasp of my intellect?" (36). As he considers how he may ensure no affinity whatsoever to Haldin, he is "inspired" by some "superior power" "with a flow of masterly argument" (36) and determinedly protests: "If I must suffer let me at least suffer for my convictions, not for a crime that my reason – my cool superior reason – rejects" (36-37). This assertion of possessing certain

convictions through reasoning elicits from him the notion that he must reject Haldin's actions as an "attractive error" and rather embrace "the stern Russian truth" (37) of preserving autocratic rule. This, he believes, is "patriotism" (37). Thus, he is persuaded, through his "cool superior reason", that his decision to betray Haldin is an expression of his patriotic and moral obligations. In these depictions of Razumov's bloated sense of superiority, Conrad seems to be holding the character up to ridicule as he parodies him as a total fake who deludes himself here and elsewhere in the narrative with his self-important rational abilities.

Apart from these attestations to his presumed superiority in relation to Haldin, Razumov further assumes this pose in his separate interactions with Ivanovitch and Sophia Antonovna. Ivanovitch tells Razumov in their meeting: "You are clearly a superior nature – that's how I read you. Quite above the common […] susceptibilities" (177). And later during the lengthy interview that Razumov is subjected to by Sophia Antonovna, she senses his arrogant insensitivity to her claim that in the line of revolutionary activity one ends up losing their personality, and chides, "you dear superior creature. You don't care" (206). The irony of the declarations by these characters is that, in their interactions with Razumov, they sense that Razumov has an exaggerated idea about his superiority and the other characters, realising this, use that knowledge to flatter and manipulate him for their own purposes. In this regard, the words of the narrator in reference to Antonovna's judgement of Razumov, which would also apply to Ivanovitch's earlier assessment, in actual fact expose Razumov as the undiscerning individual embodying the "notion of the invincible nature of human error" (235). For in is erroneous impression of his superiority, he fails to discern that these other characters are really just massaging his inflated ego. In such a state of error, he plunges and succumbs to "the utmost depths of self-deception" (235), blinded by and wallowing in his exaggerated notion of self as he becomes the unsuspecting prey of cunning manipulators.

These suggestions of error, deception and poor discernment contribute to the theme of illusion that permeates the whole narrative. An early incident that lays the foundation for this theme of illusion is significantly demonstrated through Haldin who, in "an unwise display of confidence" (301), erroneously relies on support from Razumov, "of whose opinions he knew nothing but what his own illusions suggested to his generous heart" (301). Stating this about Haldin, Razumov indirectly implies his own ability to act wisely to preserve himself and uphold his convictions.

However, thanks to an underlying irony that pervades the entire narrative it is evident that this theme of illusion equally applies to Razumov, despite the fact that he thinks himself superior to the revolutionists who he considered "doomed by the folly and the illusion that was in them – they being themselves the slaves of lies" (297). Strongly suggesting that the theme of illusion "finds its chief focus in the character of Razumov" (24), Arnold Davidson makes the revealing observation that the character's assumed name – Razumov – "relates to a Russian and Polish verb, *razumet*, meaning, in both languages, 'to reason'" (24).

In connection to this, he further points out that, in spite of this meaning that the name alludes to, Razumov, who is "ironically a student of philosophy… is continually misjudged and misjudging" (24). He is not a revolutionary as Haldin and, later, the other revolutionaries think. Neither is he really a patriot as he thinks himself to be, or portrays to the authorities, resulting in his recruitment as a double agent to help preserve the absolute power of an autocratic government. Besides, although all his strivings are really in the interest of self-preservation and the actualisation of his dreams of becoming a future professor or a celebrated statesman, even these ideas of himself are only illusions. Thus, whereas Razumov is depicted throughout the narrative as the character who is, more than any other, constantly engaged in an effort at reasoning things out – his historical, social and biographical situation, his association to Haldin, his role as a secret agent and the duplicity that that creates within himself – much of this reasoning is largely characterised by either cynicism, which "is the spirit of Russia" (63), or by mysticism, which Razumov detects in others and eventually starts to suspect of himself as well. Pairing these attributes that colour the character's reasoning ability, the narrator, inadvertently disclosing Conrad's pessimistic view on these sentiments, remarks that cynicism affects everything Russian as it "informs the declarations of her statesmen, the theories of her revolutionists, and the mystic vaticinations of prophets to the point of making freedom look like a form of debauch, and the Christian virtues themselves appear actually indecent" (63). In commensuration to this, mysticism, not pejorative but palliative in its propensity to stifle sustained rational thought and lift "every problem from the plane of the understandable" (93), accounts for the "Providential!" (255) manipulations of events and conjectures that place the character, both physically and psychologically, in a convoluted determination of his own subjectivity.

From this assertion, I approach Razumov's turmoil of thoughts from Tony Tanner's perspective of Razumov's story as "the compelling account of a man forced into wide-awakeness, a man unwillingly made intimate with the nightmare that hovers forever just under the complacencies of civilized existence" (Tanner 214). In line with this perspective, I posit then that, even in his perspective of himself as a thinking reed, Razumov is disillusioned and his notion of his thinking competencies is really no more than an ability to amass ideas and stack them one on top of another. Ample evidence of this is provided in the reverie notation of the "very remarkable document" (88) that might seem as a summary of his political ideas:

> Still-faced and his lips set hard, Razumov began to write. When he wrote a large hand his neat writing lost its character altogether – became unsteady, almost childish. He wrote five lines one under the other.
>
> History not Theory.
> Patriotism not Internationalism.
> Evolution not Revolution.
> Direction not Destruction.
> Unity not Disruption.
>
> He gazed at them dully. Then his eyes strayed to the bed and remained fixed there for a good many minutes, while his right hand groped all over the table for the penknife.
>
> He rose at last, and walking up with measured steps stabbed the paper with the penknife to the lath and plaster wall at the head of the bed. This done he stepped back a pace and flourished his hand with a glance round the room. (62).

As suggested by Councillor Mikulin, these listed ideas constitute "a sort of political confession of faith" (88). However, in the very first line of this list, Razumov himself repudiates any suggestion of a thinking process in place as his declaration, which also evokes a traditionally Marxist move: History (and Action) over Theory, inadvertently endorses embracing the past and, perhaps, re-enacting it over thoughtfully analysing that past in order to forge a new future. In his line-up therefore, it is possible to divulge Razumov's personal notion of nationalism by vertically linking the ideas he affirms and juxtaposing these against those that he disapproves of. Thus, for him, identifying with a national history, albeit autocratic, breeds a spirit of patriotism which over the

passing of time (evolution) gives direction for the future and fosters unity, while admitting some other theory that contradicts with one's history generates internationalism, which itself fosters hybridity, and gives way to revolution against, destruction and disruption of an established order. This sense of order and the maintenance of it is, undoubtedly, essential to Razumov. In fact, so important is it to him that when he returns to his rooms a few days after jotting down the ideas above and finds his books, papers and notes all muddled up into an untidy pile, the narrator states:

> This disorder affected him profoundly, unreasonably. He sat down and stared. He had a distinct sensation of his very existence being undermined in some mysterious manner, of his moral supports falling away from him one by one. He even experienced a slight physical giddiness and made a movement as if to reach for something to steady himself with. (70).

The disordering of Razumov's notes affects him to the point of making him giddy because, as suggested in the text, this disordering cuts deep to "his very existence". This testifies to the fact that these notes, significantly epitomised by the document of his political confession, represent for Razumov a slow, and doubtless, tedious construction of an identity through a painful and rather "unsteady" process of accumulating ideas, starting with his personal history. That he feels this existence is "being undermined in some mysterious manner", draws attention to the hint of some mystical attribution to his fate. Also, the fact that the sight of the disorder makes him feel that "his moral supports" are falling away "one by one" attests to this process of a cumulative piling up towards the formation of a unified self. Besides, the character of the "long scrawly letters" (61) in which he pens his ideas attest to the unsteady nature of his own identity which becomes "almost childish" (61), craving direction and purpose.

In effect, Razumov is really in error to think of himself differently as a 'thinking reed' opposed to 'unthinking forces' when he is in actual fact very much like Haldin. This fallacy of presumption, stemming from his insistence on believing himself superior and from his failure to acknowledge his true nature, is highlighted by Kostia, a fellow student. However, Razumov persistently refuses to admit to the possibility of a similarity between himself and Haldin. After Haldin's arrest, Razumov, upon resuming his classes at the university, meets Kostia, who tries to sympathise with him and demonstrate his allegiance to all forms of revolutionary action by claiming that he and a few others already know that Razumov is being monitored by the police.

In his desperation to shake him off, Razumov asks Kostia "what sort of man" he thinks he is. In response Kostia declares: "A man of ideas – and a man of action too" (74). Starting first with what he knows Razumov would like to hear, Kostia plays him by the flattery of his self-importance by describing him as a 'man of ideas'. However, after a suggestively sarcastic pause, he lumps him together with Haldin in describing him as 'a man of action too'. Analysing this response, I submit that, through the use of the connective 'and', and the intensifier 'too', Kostia equates Razumov with Haldin, achieving a fusion of the two in the process. In my assertion of such a fusion, Razumov may then be perceived as a duplication of Haldin, since for both men a strong conviction of ideas leads to action that ultimately results in political execution. Thus, Kostia's equation could not be farther from the truth, for just as Haldin's ideas lead him to carry out the act of assassination, Razumov's ideas lead him to betrayal resulting in Haldin's death. And in both cases, their actions rebound on them as they respectively become victims of their convictions.

THE SHIFTING OTHER

Although I have already identifed Razumov as the primary target of Othering in the text, the careful reader of Conrad's novel may detect that this identification of Otherness shifts onto other characters as well, thus making it impossible to pin it solely on the main character. To demonstrate this, I proceed to discuss how the secondary Others are represented before I continue to extensively explore the more complex manifestation of Otherness in relation to Razumov. In relation to these secondary Others, I make the observation that all of these appear in the second half of the novel. This is significant for the fact that while, in the first half of the novel, the reader is already able to perceive Razumov, and his *doppelgänger* Haldin, as Othered; in the second half, we detect Razumov's persistent effort to shed off this Othering, an effort marked by his relentless subconscious projection of the trait of Otherness onto these secondary Others upon his contact with them.

The first of these secondary Others that I focus on is Peter Ivanovitch who is regarded as the leader of the diasporic revolutionists in Geneva. According to the narrator:

> He had one of those bearded Russian faces without shape, a mere appearance of flesh and hair with not a single feature having any sort of character. His eyes being

> hidden by the dark glasses there was an utter absence of all expression. I knew him by sight. He was a Russian refugee of mark. All Geneva knew his burly black-coated figure. At one time all Europe was aware of the story of his life written by himself and translated into seven or more languages. In his youth he had led an idle, dissolute life. Then a society girl he was about to marry died suddenly and thereupon he abandoned the world of fashion, and began to conspire in a spirit of repentance, and, after that, his native autocracy took good care that the usual things should happen to him. He was imprisoned in fortresses, beaten within an inch of his life, and condemned to work in the mines, with common criminals. (106).

In this excerpt in which Ivanovitch is depicted as having a shapeless face which also lacks character or expression, he is reduced to "a mere appearance of flesh and hair" which evoke the notion of the grotesque. With regard to this, it is worth pointing out that the grotesque is a classic form of Othering which, as extensively reviewed by Sara Cohen Shabot, "mainly addresses bodies" (70), making alterity tangible by being located in the flesh (82). The description of Ivanovitch's appearance through the combined notions of 'flesh and hair' evokes images of the raw, the exposed and the untidy which prompt a remote feeling of disgust because they carry a suggestion of the unpleasant. As I will show later, this tinge of revulsion is exacerbated through the narrator's further depiction of the character as undeniably revolting. However, the narrator's portrayal of Ivanovitch's features in the description above already betrays a hint of repulsion for the character who is nonetheless referred to several times in the narrative as 'great', albeit often with a tinge of mockery.

This derision derives from Ivanovitch's sense of self-importance which is expressed through his writing of "the story of his life" in which he details his ordeal from being imprisoned, beaten and condemned to harsh work. In this story he further describes his ability to escape from prison through the help of a woman who had "selected him for the gift of liberty" (107) by giving him a file intended for her lover whom she had gone to visit in the same prison but who had died a week before her arrival. From the intervention of this first woman, and the help he receives from other women he encounters as he roams about the Siberian forests as a fugitive, he declares a faith in women, particularly in the "admirable Russian woman!" (105) who according to him is "so courageous, breathing such a noble ardour of service!" (105). This proclaimed faith in "woman's

spiritual superiority […] confessed since in several volumes" (107) earned him the additional designation of a feminist.

However, in the description of him captured in the excerpt above, the fact of his being associated with "common criminals" already casts a certain amount of doubt on his personality and his claims, which, despite being the narrator's impression of him, is explored throughout the entire second half of the narrative. In one noteworthy instance which holds his claims to suspicion, it is revealed that in an "odious performance" in which he scolds Tekla, the servant of Madame de S—, in a "deprecatory" manner, "the great feminist allowed himself to be abusive to a woman" (142). From this suggestion of a dubious nature, Ivanovitch is progressively Othered through his character and his appearance to the point where he is ultimately referred to in animalistic terms.

Apart from always appearing in dark glasses, he is also known for his "burly black-coated figure" which evokes the image of a bear. With reference to his story of political persecution, the narrator also describes how Ivanovitch turned into a fugitive who had become "very fierce" and "developed an unsuspected genius for the arts of a wild and hunted existence" (107) during which he stealthily crept into villages and broke into outhouses while he "lived on wild berries and hunted for honey" (107). This metaphor of the character's steady descent into a brutish nature is reinforced as the narrator recounts how his "clothing dropped off him gradually" (107) and his "naked tawny figure glimpsed vaguely through the bushes with a cloud of mosquitoes and flies hovering about the shaggy heady" (107-108). In this depiction, the concept of the grotesque that has already been alluded to is extended and enhanced as the character is shown to evolve into a hybrid form which, drawing again on Shabot's discussion of the grotesque, consists of "a mixture of animals, objects, plants and human beings" (Shabot 70). As though to already suggest to the reader that Ivanovitch's hybrid nature yet persists and that he, therefore, retains the potential for animality, the narrator recalls from his story that:

> His temper grew savage as the days went by, and he was glad to discover that there was so much of a brute in him. He had nothing else to put his trust in. For it was as though there had been two human beings indissolubly joined in that enterprise. The civilized man, the enthusiast of advanced humanitarian ideals thirsting for the triumph of spiritual love and political liberty; and the stealthy, primeval savage,

> pitilessly cunning in the preservation of his freedom from day to day, like a tracked wild beast. (108)

From the use of the words 'savage' and 'brute', the animal metaphor is sustained. However, by indicating that 'he was glad to discover that there was so much of a brute in him', the narrator draws attention to the fact that the character is in some way complicit in his animalisation. Thus, having lost access to normal society as a result of his incrimination, he lives on the fringes of that society and, unable to trust anything else, depends on his primeval instincts for survival. In this elaboration of Ivanovitch's condition as a fugitive, it is quite telling that the technique of doubling should also be applied here to suggest not only the ambiguity of the ostensible, hidden or even suppressed savagery of the character, but also the ambivalence in the narrative perspective which, typical of Conrad's style, conceals several diegetic levels.

Thus, even though this transformation of Ivanovitch is rendered through the narrator's retelling of the character's story, the reader cannot help but wonder how objective the account is, and remains uncertain as to the extent to which the narrator, who has unequivocally declared his dislike for the character, imposes his own impressions upon the retelling. Nevertheless, from Conrad's use of the technique of doubling the 'civilized man' with the 'primeval savage' the reader is left with little more than to regard Ivanovitch with a fair amount of suspicion. This suspicion, that the character can easily slip into the beastly nature which appears to be his alter ego, is fuelled by the narrator's reliance on the metaphor of savagery to indicate the primeval Other in Ivanovitch. Moreover, the fear of the character's reversion is further reinforced by the character's own claims, referenced from his story (albeit filtered through the narrator), of having slipped into the nature of a "wild beast" dominating over "the civilised humanitarian" who "watched the proceedings" of the beast "with awe" and "in fearful anxious dependence" (108).

This story of Ivanovitch's survival in his descent to an animal nature educes the concept of social Darwinism which associates humans with animals and is a common trait of naturalist fiction. However, as we move from this notion of naturalism to Conrad's modernist text, what changes with the human-animal nexus is that Ivanovitch, portrayed as the human beast, does not suffer the tragedy of a social determinism over which he has no control. Rather, he suppresses the animal state and emerges above it. This suggests that in his role as a revolutionary leader whose ideas inspire other revolutionaries, he demonstrates, in the Foucauldian sense of an embodied subject,

his power to act and think against the political powers and the social forces that specifically invest his subjectivity. This notwithstanding, throughout the rest of the narrative, the insinuation of the enduring, though perhaps suppressed, presence of Ivanovitch's savage bear-like double is sustained through such references to "his great paw" (114), and "his big hairy head" (179). In effect, he is persistently Othered in the narrative through sarcasm and the use of animal metaphors. When he encounters Razumov and takes him to see Madame de S—, the reader perceives that the character of Ivanovitch provokes the same sense of loathing in Razumov who, pursuing the imagery of brutishness, sceptically observes that as to "that hairy and obscene brute […] for all his cunning he too shall speak out some day" (185). Thus, Razumov, unlike the revolutionary Russians based in Geneva, is not deluded by Ivanovitch whom he describes as a "burly, bull-necked, deferential" to Madame de S—. As a result of his skepticism, he dissociates himself from the ideas and the character of Ivanovitch who is mockingly referred to by the narrator as "the 'Russian Mazzini'" (181), a reference that politically and ideologically links him to the 19th century Italian revolutionary hardliner, Guiseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) who was often criticised for his religio-mystical brand of nationalism.

This allusion to ideological extremism captured in the politico-historical metaphor gives a clue as to the function of Ivanovitch in the narrative – as the leader of the revolutionaries – "the Archpatron of revolutionary parties" (148) – he represents, not in action but in creed, political radicalism against the autocracy of the system. While he does not himself actively carry out any radical acts, in promoting such through his ideas he instigates others like Haldin to rash and irrational extremism. In effect, as the advocate of grand revolutionary ideas, all the other revolutionary-minded characters may be perceived as his pawns, the greatest of which is Haldin. From this vantage point, I argue that, from Foucault's notion of the creation of the subject, he becomes for such characters as Haldin, the standard to which they submit and to which they become subject. Thus, the narrator's choice to Other Ivanovitch portrays him and his ideas as spurious; and in depicting him as an Other, his pawns are doubly Othered. In a desperate effort to cast of his own Othering, of which he has become aware through his association with Haldin, Razumov attempts to escape this form of Othering under Ivanovitch. In this effort, he points out to him that, unlike others, he is not swayed by his grand ideas and emphatically states: "a mere blind tool I can never consent to be" (192).

At this declaration, Ivanovitch's reaction which betrays his disconcertion provokes Razumov to muse: "I won't move from here till he either speaks or turns away. This is a duel" (193). While at the level of the text this duel represents Ivanovitch's attempts to make Razumov submit to his ideas and will, at the level of analysis it also symbolises a subjectification that Others Razumov to himself. As Tekla categorically states: "Peter Ivanovitch is an awful despot" (195) who "can't bear thinking of anyone escaping him" (199). However, in the duel with Razumov, Ivanovitch loses when he finally speaks up. And Razumov, in silent contemplation, exalts in his triumph over the 'great man' by condemning him to his Othered animalised nature in the summary opinion of his encounter with him as "Beastly!" (193). It is worth noting that his pronouncement of this verdict in actual fact relates to the uncanny sensation he has after the proceedings with Ivanovitch "as though another self, an independent sharer of his mind, had been able to view his whole person very distinctly indeed" (193). From my analysis so far, I would venture to argue that this other self is indeed his internalised double, Haldin, whose action has earlier subjected them both to Ivanovitch's despotic control. Thus, in dissociating himself from Ivanovitch's ideas, Razumov effects a severance of himself from that form of Othering through subjectification under Ivanovitch, a process that is subconsciously observed by his internalised double Haldin.

The second character in the narrative that I discuss as Othered is Madame de S— of whom the narrator declares, "I had a positive abhorrence for the painted, bedizened, dead-faced, glassy-eyed Egeria of Ivanovitch. I do not know what was her attitude to the unseen, but I know that in the affairs of this world she was avaricious, greedy, and unscrupulous" (139). In this description of Madame de S— (whose name depicts a typical feature of 19th century novels, particularly romans à clefs), the narrator sums up her appearance and her character for the reader. She is presented as often being in a "mystical state of mind" (184); and, to corroborate her alleged covetous nature, it is revealed that "she had been worsted in a sordid and desperate quarrel about money matters with the family of her late husband" (139). Known also as Eleanor Maximovna, she is often represented in morbid tones which evoke images of death and evil.

With "an obviously painted face" (181) – which metaphorically connotes deception – and an "elegant stiffness" (181), the impression she makes on Razumov, upon his first encounter with her, is that she is a "witch in Parisian clothes", a "portent" (181). Thus, when she entreats him to sit down and draw his chair closer to her, Razumov gravely reflects that he was "being received

graciously, with a smile which made him think of a grinning skull" (182). The persistent use of the imagery of death and the ominous suggestions that such imagery evokes in connection to this character is further accentuated by other references to her which liken her to "a galvanized corpse out of some Hoffman's Tale" and an "ancient, painted mummy with unfathomable eyes" (182). Here, the intertextual allusion to Hoffman's gothic fictions, and perhaps specifically to 'The Sandman", the Hoffman tale that Freud analyses in his theorisation of the uncanny, is explicitly indicated.

Considering such intertextuality, it is possible to draw a parallel between Olympia, Hoffman's wooden automated doll with fixed, staring eyes and Madame de S— who is described in equally mechanical and cold terms. Besides, the use of the name "Egeria" in reference to her alludes to the mythological nymph alleged to have been a counsellor to an ancient Roman ruler. These allusions, filtered through the funereal metaphors of "a galvanized corpse" and a "painted mummy", combine to confer upon her a fetish and mystical quality which takes on an uncanny aspect due to her fascinating, yet morbid, appearance. Discussing this intertextuality between "The Sandman" and *Under Western Eyes* as a form of generic transformation, Hawthorn points out that the characterisation of Olympia converges with that of Madame de S— at multiple levels.

The most striking similarities are the constant references to the 'unfathomable' or expressionless eyes of each of these characters; the use of the words "stiff" or "stiffness" in application to both characters; and the fact that, just as in Hoffman's tale the main character is fascinated by Olympia, so also in Conrad's narrative, is Razumov fascinated by Madame de S—. In being thus compared to an automated wooden doll; depicted in appearance as bearing ghoulish cadaverous features; and represented in overall morbid terms, Madame de S— is portrayed as the mystical monstrous Other who embodies all the "beings that are worse than ogres, ghouls, and vampires" (213) that, according to the revolutionist Sophia Antonovna, watch over Russia as it gets "lapped up in evils" (212-213).

Directly linked to Madame de S— as an Other is Tekla, her designated "lady companion" (306) and, in reality, her "slave" (306). Even though she is also depicted as bearing the doll-like stiffness, and wide vacant stare of Hoffman's Olympia, Tekla's Otherness is essentially different from that of Madame de S— in that it is devoid of the evilness associated with the latter. Drawing again on Hawthorn's analysis, I accede that in comparison to Madame de S—, Tekla is presented

in “overwhelmingly positive terms” (45). In the narrative, Miss Haldin refers to her as a “good soul” (308) and also describes her as “a good Samaritan by an irresistible vocation” (308) for her altruism. This biblical allusion to the Good Samaritan occurs throughout the narrative in only three instances, and all in reference to Tekla. Acquainted to being solicitous about the welfare of others, it is revealed that when Razumov becomes crippled and ill in the end, it is she who tends him “unweariedly with the pure joy of unselfish devotion” (312). Besides, she is also depicted as being subservient in nature to the extent that she is exploited by both Ivanovitch and Madame de S—.

During the writing of his books, Ivanovitch makes Tekla act as his secretary and demands that she sit rigidly behind a desk to take dictation from him. While she waits for him to compose his thoughts, she is forbidden to stare out of the window or at him because, according to him, she stared “stupidly” and her “air of unintelligent expectation irritated him” (128). When Razumov goes with Ivanovitch to see Madame de S—, he notices that Tekla retreats “into a distant corner out of everybody’s sight” (183) after serving them tea and, from time to time, when Ivanovitch finished his tea, “he flourished his hand above his shoulder. At that signal the lady companion [Tekla], ensconced in her corner, with round eyes like a watchful animal, would dart out to the table and pour him another tumblerful” (184). Razumov further observes that in this servile state Tekla is “anxious and tremulous” even while she is totally ignored by Ivanovitch and Madame de S—. Thus, throughout the narrative, Tekla is represented in a state of abasement to the extent of even being compared to a slavish animal. It is in this way that she is cast as an Other, that is always prepared to expend herself and live in the shadow of others.

With respect to these two characters, Madame de S— and Tekla, who appear to be on opposite extremes of the same spectrum, I point out that they subliminally bear a pendulum effect on Razumov who attempts an ontological construction of subjectivity free of epistemological influences. While Madame de S— through her devious mystical schemes attempts to sway Razumov into compliance with Ivanovitch’s authority and ideas, Tekla encourages him to actively resist such a submission of his subjectivity. Thus, in an extension of their representation as respectively symbolising good and evil, these characters ethically and psychologically represent the forces of good and evil that influence Razumov in his self-determination.

His aversion to Madame de S— and her methods marks a repudiation of any mystical notions that may be attached to the construction of his identity within his socio-political space,

whereas his “humane manner” and “civility” (196) towards Tekla indicates an identification with her ordinary, and abused, humanity which recognises and respects the individuality of each person within a homogenising and obliterating autocratic system. When Razumov rejects the very tempting option to continue to live a lie and gain the acceptance of the revolutionaries by forever hiding his secret of betrayal, he is left with the painful option of confessing the truth about himself and thereby liberating himself from the double bind of totalitarian subjectivity which, to draw again on Foucault, binds him to the power structure and also allows him to define himself only in relation to that system of power. Once he chooses to release himself from this double bind, he suffers the consequence of being made invalid by Nikita, a secret agent who takes advantage of the despotism on both sides of the autocratic divide – government and revolutionary forces – to game the system.

Another character who is depicted in Othering terms in the narrative is Julius Laspara, whose dwarfish stature differentiates him from a social standard of appearance and who is portrayed as living in sombre and unkempt quarters with his dishevelled daughters. Besides, there is also Sophia Antonovna whose inquiring gaze is set off against her constantly frowning “black eyebrows” (219) which bear a “quaint Mephistophelian character” (270) but are nonetheless “curiously evil-less” or “un-devilish” (271). She is also constantly associated with the Faustian demon, and described as “the true spirit of destructive revolution” (219), as she embodies “the very spirit of ruthless revolution” (219). In effect, the character is depicted as appearing to have certain tendencies – Mephistophelian – which she, in actual fact, does not have at all. However, in the notion that she embodies the essence of revolutionary ruthlessness and destructiveness, the character is captured in an inexplicable in-betweenness of being simultaneously ‘un-devilish’ while yet appearing Mephistophelian.

From these depictions, Sophia Antonovna, “whose word had such a weight in the ‘active’ section of every party” (219), encompasses the whole revolutionary community in a state of alterity which is heavily marked by an ambivalence of identity that, while creating a duplicity of character, also results in a dichotomy between the traits and the actual appearance of these characters associated with the apparatus of revolutionary antagonism. Such an ambivalent identity, resulting in the individual being neither altogether one thing nor another, is precisely what Razumov tries to escape. However, the bane of his effort remains the fact that while, naturally, he notices these

discrepancies in others like Sophia Antonovna, he fails to recognise his own shortcoming significantly marked by his inflated opinion of his rational capabilities which consistently trips him up through his susceptibility to flattery.

Thus, Sophia Antonovna's Othering through an ambivalence of identity draws the reader's attention to Razumov's own liminality represented by the dichotomy of what he perceives or portrays himself to be, as well as what he denies being, as opposed to what he really is. In a meeting between the two, Antonovna hints at such an ambivalence in Razumov's character when in her frustration at his frivolous interaction with her she chides him stating, "Or, perhaps, you are only playing a part" (210). When he, however, keeps up the facetious attitude, she simply gives up and indulgently yet anxiously concludes: "Shallow talk! I suppose one must pardon this weakness in you" (211). Yet, following on what appears to be her slight suspicion of duplicity in Razumov, she confronts him with information she has obtained about his role in the Haldin affair. During this confrontation, she, like others, plays Razumov by flattery leading him to reveal more than he intends to and leaving him with a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about himself and his current role among the revolutionaries as a secret agent.

This role that, marked by duplicity, reinforces Razumov's ambivalence of identity, directly links him to Nikita who, represented at once as a revolutionary assassin as well as a police spy, is a typical example of such a duplicitous member of the revolutionary movements. In his characterisation as a double agent, Nikita is depicted in grotesque terms that render him repugnant even to the reader. He is fat and has a "heavy paunch" (303) "like a balloon" (223), and "enormous hands" (303). Moreover, it is revealed that he speaks in a piping voice which produces the effect of "an indescribable sound, a sort of feeble squeak, as of some angry small animal" (271). His function as a revolutionary assassin is ridiculed when the sound of his voice is elsewhere likened to the "falsetto of a circus clown beginning an elaborate joke" (222); and it astonishes as well as irritates Razumov who wonders how such a "creature, so grotesque as to set town dogs barking at its mere sight, [could] go about on those deadly errands [of assassination] and slip through the meshes of the police" (223).

From this description of Nikita Necator, the "man with a sinister alliterative nickname" and the "executioner of revolutionary verdicts", the reader cannot help but observe, in consistency with Razumov's disdain, that his appearance largely contradicts his fame as the "terrifying N.N."

(223). While this abbreviation may very well refer to his name Nikita Necator, it also evokes the Latin term nomen nescio, often abbreviated as N.N., which is used to signify an anonymous or unnamed person. Since, in the narrative, the name of this despicable two-faced character is indicated, the evocation of the anonymous term may, in actual fact, be in relation to his personality which reveals no outstanding or remarkable qualities, hence extending on the semantic connotation of the term anonymous. After he is introduced to Razumov by Sophia Antononva, Nikita resentfully draws away, protesting jealously about Razumov being greatly admired by the revolutionaries. As he retreats, the narrator indicates that his receding voice is "reduced to the proportions of a squeaking toy by the distance" (225). As with the intertext of Hoffman's wooden doll to earlier characters, this metaphor of a "squeaking toy" drawing also on the imagery of an automated figure, objectifies the character. Further referred to as a "horrible, paunchy brute" (262) with a "bull neck" (303), it becomes evident that Nikita is Othered through persistent ridicule and animalisation, with specific references to his appearance and his voice. The effect of this is that he is made despicable even to the reader.

Thus, to avoid being linked in function to such an odious character, Razumov, realising that his own role as a double agent reinforces this nature of duplicity that he would rather escape, is led to confess his betrayal of Haldin and relinquish his role as a secret agent. Through his confession and self-disclosure, Razumov attempts to dissociate himself from the complex of duplicity, thereby contesting his Othering through the ambivalence of representation. In all of these instances in which Razumov meets these Othered characters, he is "ready for battle" (214). For Razumov, this battle is two-fold in nature. On the one hand, he needs to be able to assert himself as superior to these Others and abandon them to their Otherness. On the other hand, he must avoid being contaminated by their Otherness and become like them rather of be his own person. His failure to stall such an Othering of himself would permanently cast him as a pushover, establishing him indelibly as the Other's Other.

Therefore, while these Othered characters attempt to identify themselves with him and, by so doing, make him equal to them; he rejects this identification and dissociates himself from them, thereby separating himself from their Othered selves. When Ivanovitch patronises him saying, "you, at any rate, are one of *us*" (176), Razumov sneeringly declares: "To be sure my name is not Gugenheimer. […]. I am not a democratic Jew" (176). He further protests, "I don't want anyone

to claim me. But Russia *can't* disown me. She cannot! […]. I am *it*!" (176). In this declaration, he sets himself above all of these other Russians by claiming to be Russia itself. In so doing, he establishes himself as the signifying self against whom all these Others may define themselves. And he is arguably right as he is captured as the main pivot in the events forming this narrative which he calls "a comedy of errors, phantoms, and suspicions" (88). Therefore, by raising himself above these Others, he rebuffs any efforts made by them to shift their Otherness onto him through any manner of identification and insists on the construction of his own identity through the slow and painful process of self-realisation.

The last minor character that I discuss as othered is Mrs. Haldin, the mother of Victor Haldin. Throughout the second part of the text, the narrator reveals how she grieves over her son about whose disappearance and silence she yearns to get more information, and of whose political crime and death she learns later. As she sinks deeper into grief, she also develops a single-minded attitude of remaining, for most of the day, confined to a chair by the window and constantly looking out as if in expectation of someone. Regarding this state of "mad expectation" (264) and despair, the narrator declares:

> Poor Mrs. Haldin! I confess she frightened me a little. She was one of those natures, rare enough, luckily, in which one cannot help being interested, because they provoke both terror and pity. One dreads their contact for oneself, and still more for those one cares for, so clear it is that they are born to suffer and to make others suffer, too. (263)

In this assertion of his fear of Mrs. Haldin, the narrator confesses several lines later in the narrative that this fear arises out of his concern for Natalia Haldin, Victor Haldin's sister, who could be grimly impacted by the mother's depression, resulting from the brother's death. As she grieves over her son, she refuses "to abandon him quietly to the dumb unknown" (102). It is this that causes her to suffer and to make Natalia suffer as well. In confirmation of the fact that Mrs. Haldin does not suffer alone but projects her pain onto her daughter, Natalia explains to the teacher that Mrs. Haldin has begun to believe that her children doubt and mistrust her; and that she obstinately imputes her son's death to this notion which, Natalia states, she holds on to "to torment herself and me, for all the years to come" (103). In his roundabout way of thinking about Natalia, the teacher states that Natalia's mother is 'one of those natures' that 'provoke both terror and pity'. In this

reflection on Mrs. Haldin's tragedy, the teacher suggests that her sorrow through suffering is catching, and hence the dread of contact with her.

Besides, the narrator's dreaded terror of her arises from the insinuation of an intimacy between her depression and mania, foreshadowed by the historical and psychological intimacy fostered between mother and son. Through the unfolding of the narrative, it becomes evident to the reader that Mrs. Haldin's propinquity to her son transcends the filial connection she has to him and comprises the consanguineous connection to "that enthusiast brother of hers – the officer they shot under Nicholas" (264), from whom Victor Haldin has "inherited a revolutionary inspiration together with a resemblance" (57). Thus, in an uncanny repetition of a family history of revolution leading to political execution, Mrs. Haldin emerges as a vital link, indeed the only one, between her son and her brother. To illuminate this connection, I draw on Derrida's concept of hauntology which proposes that any attempt to evaluate an identity or event must be predicated on the assumption of an always-already existing antecedent. Based on this assumption, he claims that every situation is impacted by a lingering (read haunting) of the past in the present.

Therefore, the present can only be fully understood when it is deconstructed through an assessment of its temporal, historical and ontological connection to the past. Closely relating this concept to his notion of deconstruction, Derrida coins the term from a combination of the word 'haunt', which connotes ghostly manifestations, and the word 'ontology', a near-homonym of the coined term (Colin Davis 373). In an application of this concept to an analysis of musical evolution from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, Mark Fisher (2012) asserts that, not only the past but also, "the future is always experienced as a haunting" (16). Analysing Mrs. Haldin's connector position from such a hauntological reading of the narrative, it becomes apparent that through her, and in her obstinate sense of futile expectation, the past (brother) exists as a virtuality that impinges on the present (son).

However, drawing still on Fisher's idea of the future existing as a haunt of the present, I posit that when Razumov finally goes to see Mrs. Haldin, he recognises in her despairing yet eager stare a "sense of yearning for a future that [he] feels cheated out of" (Mark Fisher, 16). By the point in the narrative at which this meeting between Razumov and Mrs. Haldin occurs, the reader has already perceived how, as a result of her despondency, Mrs. Haldin has gradually deteriorated in health as well as in sanity – she "has been so awfully silent: for weeks" (267); her "regular

features" that "testified to her past beauty" (91) have given way to a "poor, wasted face as calm as stone" (267); she has delusions (267); and Natalia states: "She is ill. Her very soul is" (267). In addition to her physical and mental deterioration she has also taken on an "awful aspect" (100) as she arguably symbolises the tragic present in whom the past (revolt and death), and the future (resignation and regression) have converged. As Razumov tells her about her son, he thinks to himself: "The phantom of Haldin had been indeed walked over, was left behind lying powerless and passive on the pavement covered with snow. And this was the phantom's mother consumed with grief and white as a ghost" (281).

It is important to point out that at the time he sees this "phantom" of Haldin in the snow and walks over him, Haldin is still alive. This apparition could then be a foreshadowing of Haldin's execution in line with the political history of his mother's brother, signifying a bleeding of the past into the present, transmitted over the sister/mother, Mrs Haldin. Thus, Haldin is placed as the present analogue of a past history. In juxtaposing Mrs. Haldin to this image of the phantom and comparing her to a ghost, Razumov does not only project onto her the spectral attribute of Haldin which has been plaguing him, but he, in fact, tries to detach himself from this quality and divest himself indefinitely of his spectral Other. However, even though Mrs. Haldin is Othered through her comparison to a ghost, she does not relieve Razumov of the plague of the Other. A disconcerted Razumov notes that Mrs. Haldin "had turned away her head while he was speaking. The silence that had fallen on his last words had lasted five minutes or more" (281).

As he wonders to himself what this could mean, he comes to the alarming discovery that, regarding his spectral Other, Haldin, it is "impossible to get rid of him" and that he cannot "shake him off" (282). Thus, as he literally flees from the mother, his spectral Other hangs onto him and he has lost the battle of shifting this Otherness onto her. Consequently, although Mrs. Haldin is, in her own right, captured as an Other through spectrality, she does not purge Razumov of this attribute, but rather consolidates it in him. In effect, Mrs Haldin may be perceived as a sort of doppelgänger of her son Haldin; and Razumov's encounter with her represents a hauntological encounter with his internalised double. This encounter, while disconcerting enough to make Razumov flee, also intensifies his inner conflict as he is psychologically confronted with the falsehood of his existence and actions, a falsehood that Others him even to himself. In an anxious bid to shed off all pretences and falsehood, to emerge as a truer nature to replace the exaggerated

illusions he has so far held of himself, the encounter with Mrs Haldin, having produced a sort of self-reflective effect on him, triggers his confession to Natalie and later to the gathering of revolutionaries. While he suffers grievously following this confession, he is liberated from an identity constructed by and for others as he also frees himself of the anxiety for social acceptance by conforming to stifling totalitarian stipulations or giving in to despotic manipulations.

THE SPECTRE IN THE TALE

Extending from my discussion of the encounter between Razumov and Mrs. Haldin which is significantly impacted by the spectre of Haldin, I proceed to carry out a focused examination of Razumov's Othering through spectrality. In preamble to this examination I point out that as shocking as it is violent, the first murder we encounter in the narrative is the "political murder" (83) committed by Haldin and his accomplice in the streets of St. Petersburg. However, as the plot unfolds we perceive that the notion of murder carried forth from the described evidence of this first incident slowly changes and takes on different meanings as it is interchanged and approximated with "war" (26), "execution" (254), "revolutionary tyranny" (75), "crushing the Infamy" (220) and even "betrayal" (38). In a narrative so centrally constructed on murder, it is little wonder that it should also be plagued by spectres.

Set primarily in Russia, the first major part of the narrative, made up of the assassination of the government official Mr. de P— and the enquiry, arrest and execution that follow it, physically takes place in St. Petersburg. The second major part of the novel, which reveals Razumov's life as a double agent and spy on the revolutionaries leading up to his confession, takes place in a quarter of Geneva called "La Petite Russie" (11). The name of this smaller setting links it to the larger geographical and political sphere of Russia, of which it is a synecdochical extension. Thus, on the whole, the narrative is set, geographically and through spatial transposition, in Russia. In reference, then, to this essentially Russian setting, the narrator states that it is a "land of spectral ideas and disembodied aspirations" (35). This symbolic reference to the setting of the narrative does not only stem from the fact of its political establishment upon "the principle of autocracy" (14) which asserts its rule over a people through acts of repression. It also underscores the fate of our main character, Razumov, whose encounter with Haldin alters him to the point of a radical Otherness, through which, in asserting his subjectivity, he eventually self-obliterates.

On the one hand, the metaphors of 'spectral ideas and disembodied aspirations' may well refer to the murmur of abstract ideas" (245) that, according to the narrator, is peculiar to the Russian nature, no matter how "strongly engaged in the drama of action" they may be (245). However, on the other hand, I argue that it largely denotes Razumov's half-formed ideas which I have discussed above. Even at the end of the narrative when he is ill and dying, Antonovna states that some of the revolutionaries continue to pass through to see him every now and then because "He is intelligent. He has ideas… He talks well, too" (312). This revelation nevertheless only goes to confirm earlier suggestions that Razumov is full of ideas; and the mention that he talks well only evokes for us the narrator's allusion, right at the beginning of the story, to man as "a mere talking animal not much more wonderful than a parrot" (11). That his ideas amount only to, if anything at all, "disembodied aspirations" is evidenced by the fact that his future aspirations to become a celebrated person in Russia remains a dream that will never be realised. The illusory representation of that greatness projected into the future as a professor or a Privy Councillor remains only an illusions, underscored by the phrase, "nothing more!" (19) which follows immediately after Razumov's conceptualisation of this future vision of himself. Thus, that unrealised and unattainable future self, symbolising the disembodied aspirations because it is only a mental image, remains a spectre that haunts him as much as Haldin does.

When Conrad's narrator, the teacher of languages, meets Razumov for the first time in Geneva, his initial impression of him is that he is "[s]tudious – robust – shy" (153). However, since this meeting is being mentioned late in the narrative, we, the readers, have already formed our impressions of the protagonist through the flashback related by the narrator who reconstructs the plot of the story through Razumov's diary. Through that earlier exposition of the events surrounding Razumov's departure to Geneva, it is revealed, for instance, that he is already a much antagonised individual. It is also revealed that from the events that have unexpectedly occurred in Razumov's life, he has become embroiled in what Yael Levin (2011) describes as a "hauntological matrix" (23). Borrowing the notion of hauntology from Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1994), Levin uses this term to launch an exploration into the "uncanny returns" made up of a combination of "spectres, words and compulsively repeated scenes [that] all conspire to unhinge [Razumov]" (23). This not only leaves his future plans irreversibly sabotaged, but also captures him in a duality of character that casts him in a mould of Otherness strongly impacted by the spectre of Haldin.

Described in certain ways that already reveal that he is considered different by other characters, Razumov is referred to by Haldin as a "regular Englishman" (25) with "frigid English manner[s]" (21). By this reference he is linked to the English narrator through whose translation of Razumov's diary this "Russian story" (140) is revealed. Thus, on the one hand, the narrator insists that the events surrounding Razumov and affecting his life and plans are Russian in nature and obscure to a Western understanding which is "not attuned to certain tones of cynicism and cruelty [and] moral negation" (140). Nevertheless, on the other hand, this obscurantism is compromised by the fact that being symmetrically connected to the narrator, Razumov himself is not considered altogether Russian, and it is, as I will elaborate below, perhaps his eyes that the title refers to. However, owing to the fact that Kirylo Sidorovitch Razumov bears a Russian name and claims a Russian heritage and yet is labelled English by his compatriots, it is possible to view him as an extension of the narrator whose narration is drawn from Razumov's diary and so is second-told to us from "the document" (163). That our narrator is a "teacher of languages" is significant for the fact that he is able to recount the events recorded in Razumov's diary for the benefit of his intended readers, who are pre-intended as English.

Thus, it might be possible to extend this foreshadowing to Razumov, who arguably writes his diary with such a conscious conjecture of who might read it. In parcelling it off to Natalia who then hands it over to the teacher of languages, from whom she has received English lessons, Razumov may, perhaps, be the one who is indeed making an effort to explain these events to a projected English audience. The narrator attests that all that he brings to this "document" – Razumov's diary – is his "knowledge of the Russian language" (11). In so stating, he distances himself from the narrative, thus indicating that whereas Razumov remains the original teller, he, on the other hand is simply the transmitter of the story already written by Razumov. Thus, behind his telling is Razumov's diary written "in a narrative form" (11) and bearing the original story in Russian, which is largely translated for the benefit of the narrator's readers. Consequently, the narrator is twice removed from the events described in Razumov's record, thus making his readers at least thrice removed. If then his translation of the diary cannot be trusted, then one can only attempt to read in between the lines and make an effort to see through the eyes of the writer of the diary – Razumov. Therefore, referred to as an Englishman, Razumov's eyes are really the Western eyes under which the plot develops, and under which the narration unfolds.

This reference to Razumov as an Englishman seems to ethnically preclude him from identifying as Russian, so that, in the scheme of things Russian, Razumov is depicted as an outsider, an Other. It is this ultimate Otherness, of non-belongingness and of feeling socially and racially excluded, that Razumov contests to the very end. Thus, a careful examination of most of his actions will reveal a desperate desire and effort to belong. He is, nevertheless, consistently marked as different. Highlighting this difference, Haldin alludes to the fact that as opposed to his own rash character which causes him to commit the act of murder without giving it much thought, Razumov is "[c]ollected – cool as a cucumber" (25). We also learn from the narrator that, even among other Russians, Razumov "looked foreign enough…. […] His features were more decided than in the generality of Russian faces" (153). This distinction of features sets him apart as alien to the vast majority, an alienation that is further accentuated by the fact that he is a loner who has no friends and is "[o]fficially and in fact without a family…. He [is] as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea." (17).

This comparison of the world to the deep sea produces a paradoxical effect in the sense that the idea of the world, though abstract in concept, evokes also a certain degree of solidity and firmness, whereas the sea, though it may be considered concrete in nature, evokes the notion of fluidity that insinuates instability and even tumult. So, for Razumov to be compared, in his loneliness, to a man swimming in the deep sea, he is removed from the solidity and firmness of the world and transposed onto the precarious fluidity and capriciousness of the sea where his condition of isolation is accentuated. Although this metaphor of alienation only marks the foreshadowing of a complex Otherness that is expanded in other ways that I will discuss shortly, it remains the predominant feature of Razumov's life which seems to predispose him to his fate. As he slowly arrives at the decision to betray Haldin and once he has committed the deed, he suffers from conflicted emotions and a guilty conscience marked by nightmares of "walking through drifts of snow in a Russia where he was as completely alone as any betrayed autocrat could be" (62).

In this figurative depiction of his "solitary individuality" (17), he is at once identified and associated with his act of betrayal. However, in his comparison to an 'autocrat', he is also associated with a "[f]idelity to menaced institutions" (46) within a "despotic Government" (29) whose practice of a harsh autocracy "represses ideas, guards its power, and defends its existence"

(28) all in the bid to uphold "the safety of a throne and of a people" (46). In this tormented state of uncertainty, Razumov questions the basis and symbolic importance of his allegiance: "What is a throne? A few pieces of wood upholstered in velvet. But a throne is a seat of power too" (36). His contemplation of a throne as not merely decorated wood but as 'a seat of power' demonstrates a process of rationalisation in which he fathoms that one sure way to gain acceptance, and to achieve the belongingness he desperately yearns for, is through allegiance to this seat of power the authority of which can sanction his identity as a result of being affiliated to it. In this semiotic analysis of the relationship between a throne, trite wood and legitimising power, Razumov affirms his love for his country through faith in "autocracy for the peace of [his] patriotic conscience" (35), and, hence, he decides to give Haldin up.

Embracing simply the fact that, through his belief in autocracy, he is Russian and claiming that "immense parentage" (17) as his only heritage, Razumov's fidelity to the "[d]espotic bureaucracy" (37) casts him at once as representative of the despot while at the same time, through his betrayal, he denounces the reactionary forces that kick against such despotism. In effect, he is both the betrayer and the betrayed. In his reflection upon the word and the action it connotes, he asserts that in order for betrayal to be enacted or fulfilled, "[t]here must be a moral bond first" (38-39) to the object of betrayal. As he decides to betray Haldin, he denies sharing any such bond with him, declaring that all that "a man can betray is his conscience" (39), his own leaning towards patriotism. In his deliberations, he draws attention to morality, specifically to the notion of the ethical that is inextricably linked to his act of betrayal. Consequently, even though at the beginning he assures himself that he is not bound to Haldin by any "bond of common faith, [nor] of common conviction" (39) and that he is doing the right thing by turning him in; in the end when he confesses his treachery to Natalie Haldin, he attests that "[i]n giving Victor Haldin up, it was myself, after all, whom I have betrayed most basely" (298). For he comes to the realisation that in his self-centred need to gain acceptance, he betrays the trust of a fellow human being; and in his attempt to contest his Otherness through such a betrayal and its ensuing deception, his actions end up as a total aberration of what may be considered ethical. Consequently, he becomes estranged, Othered even to himself.

Further linked to Razumov's alienating isolation is the undesired effect that his contact with Haldin's crime has on his life and plans through the "fatal conjunction of events" (40) which

mark a tragic end to his hopes and aspirations. On the very day of Haldin's assassination of the state official, Razumov was planning to prepare a "prize essay" for the award of a "silver medal" which was "offered by the Ministry of Education" and which held for him the promise of a bright future: "The mere fact of trying would be considered meritorious in the higher quarters; and the possessor of the prize would have a claim to an administrative appointment of the better sort after he had taken his degree" (17). With this view of the possibility of reaping huge future profits from diligent self-application, Razumov "hankered after the silver medal" (17) and "resolved to have a good try for [it]" (19). He had great plans for himself which thrived on his vision of someday transforming himself into "a somebody" (19), "one of the glories of Russia" (19), believing that his ability to win the medal would mark "a solid beginning" (20) to this future success. Unfortunately for him, all of these dreams and aspirations are tainted by Haldin's decision to seek refuge with and help from him. This jeopardises his plans and dashes his hopes. He despondently remarks that all of his hard work and dreams have been thwarted:

> He thought with a sort of dry, unemotional melancholy; three years of good work gone, the course of forty more perhaps jeopardized – turned from hope to terror, because events started by human folly link themselves into a sequence which no sagacity can foresee and no courage can break through. Fatality enters your rooms while your landlady's back is turned; you come home and find it in possession bearing a man's name, clothed in flesh – wearing a brown cloth coat and long boots – lounging against the stove. It asks you, 'Is the outer door closed?' – and you don't know to take it by the throat and fling it downstairs. You don't know. You welcome the crazy fate. 'Sit down,' you say. And it is all over. You cannot shake it off any more. It will cling to you for ever. Neither halter nor bullet can give you back the freedom of your life and the sanity of your thought." (76).

In this succinct assessment of his fate Razumov views the impact of Haldin's association with him from the point of view of his individuality. In his cogitations he captures Haldin as the embodiment of "fatality" which has suddenly stolen upon him unawares. He bemoans the fact that he was unable to make the right judgement or muster the courage to throw Haldin out of his rooms when he arrived and found him there. Personally reflecting upon his welcoming response to Haldin, he examines his own actions and decisions, and concludes that in his failure to have violently rejected

Haldin, the harbinger of a "crazy fate", he made a poor judgement and it is this that marks the end of his freedom as well as of his hopes. He rightly recognises this moment when he finds Haldin in his rooms as the defining moment for his future plans and hopes.

However, it is also, for us the readers, the defining moment of his convictions and of his character. For even though he does not yet know about Haldin's crime until later, it is in that moment that he becomes indefinitely linked to Haldin's actions, his personality and his revolutionary ideas. He realises that this 'fatality' which has subtly interpolated his progress and surreptitiously entered his rooms embodied in the person of Haldin, 'will cling to [him] for ever'. This imagery of clinging evokes for us one of Conrad's common tropes of the double – the secret sharer or the second self – which he uses more explicitly in other narratives such as in *The Secret Sharer*, but explores in more elusive ways in *Under Western Eyes*. Extending from this allusion of a duality of personality, it is already possible to see Razumov captured in the potential Otherness of doubling right from this early stage of the narrative. Following the realisation of his circumstances and later recognising the fact that, being linked to Haldin, he is thereafter marked as a suspect, Razumov considers the possibility of salvaging himself and contemplates if he may not redeem his hopes by "keep[ing] on as before" (251). Once again, in this decision to carry on as though nothing had happened, we identify another latent attempt by Razumov to contest this form of Othering through doubling with Haldin.

Therefore, he decides that this is probably the best line of action to take: "Study. Advance. Work hard as if nothing had happened (and first of all win the Silver Medal), acquire distinction, become a great reforming servant of the greatest of States. Servant, too, of the mightiest homogenous mass of mankind (…) the Russian nation!" (251). Nevertheless, in this contemplation, we find that Razumov further emphasises his potential Otherness. For in his conceptualisation of his future self as transcending and rising above the status of a minion, Razumov persists in seeing that future glorious self as a servant, a mere tool of the mightier machine, the State. In this paradoxical self-imagination that depicts him as both great and yet subservient, he affirms the fact of belonging to the larger "homogenous mass" even while he yet negates his significance in that mass. If he becomes great, the State is the greatest and he is only its servant.

Thrust into uncertainty about the fate of his future, and contemplating that, in similar circumstances, others "had fathers, mothers, brothers, relations, connexions, to move heaven and earth on their behalf" whereas "he had no one" (25), Razumov laments: "Because I haven't that, must everything else be taken away from me? (29). In an outburst against Haldin whom he considers to have ruined his future hopes "by forcing upon" him his "confidence" (296) of having committed the "reckless" act of assassination, "like a butcher …scattering death" (26), he states:

> "You are a son, a brother, a nephew, a cousin …to no end of people. I am just a man. Here I stand before you. A man with a mind. Did it ever occur to you how a man who had never heard a word of warm affection or praise in his life would think on matters on which you would think first with or against your class, your domestic tradition – your fireside prejudices?... Did you ever consider how a man like that would feel? I have no domestic tradition. I have nothing to think against. My tradition is historical. What have I to look back to but that national past from which you gentlemen want to wrench away your future? Am I to let my intelligence, my aspirations towards a better lot, be robbed of the only thing it has to go upon as the will of violent enthusiasts? You come from your province, but all this land is mine – or I have nothing." (57-58)

In this outburst, Razumov places Haldin in a continuum of social and filial relations that set him ad infinitum among a mass of 'no end of people'. He, on the other hand, is 'just a man'. In this comparison of himself as a single unit against an infinite mass he asserts his individuality and his total isolation while emphasising the fact of his difference as a direct result of his lack of parentage. This lack separates and in fact even distances him, casting upon him an otherness that is heavily hinged on the notion of separateness between the individual and the mass. Thus, when he declares, '[h]ere I stand before you', the 'I' represents the solitary unit (himself) which is disproportionately matched against a 'you' that is synecdochally plural in that it refers not only to Haldin but to the innumerable persons that populate his social 'class' and represent for him a 'domestic tradition' formed from 'fireside prejudices'. The metaphorical reference to 'fireside prejudices' alludes to the notion of a functional home or hearth characterised by warmth, nurturing and security, which Razumov, unlike Haldin, essentially lacks.

Nevertheless, despite evoking this image of being caught in such a socio-cultural imbalance, Razumov, within the same breath, turns the scales of the balance against the mass and upsets the equation by pitting the presumed powerful 'mind' of the single man against the senseless might of the many. Against the 'domestic tradition' of the mass he states that his tradition is historical. Whereas the mass look back to their (local) 'fireside prejudices' to inspire their future, he looks back to a 'national past' to aspire 'towards a better lot'. In replacing the domestic with the historical and the local with the national, and in looking back to the past as his means of achieving a better future, Razumov both anachronistically and diachronically transgresses the notions of space (fireside, domestic, national) and time (past, present, future) in his resentment against Haldin. At the end of this confrontation in which the man is pitted against the people, his mind against their might and his intelligence against their violence, Razumov speciously defeats the mass (made up of the people but represented by and personified in Haldin) by declaring, '[y]ou come from your province, but all this land is mine – or I have nothing'.

Thus, he confines them to only a small place (the province) while he claims the whole land (encompassing and swallowing up the province). This is however a specious defeat because in claiming the whole land of which the province is a part, he claims also the part. So, he at once rejects Haldin and accepts him, distancing himself from him while yet internalising him. Thus, after he has secretly betrayed Haldin, Razumov is caught in a moral battle with his conscience, a battle in which Haldin, internalised, transforms into his (Razumov's) alter ego, an extension of himself. With Haldin thus internalised and transformed, he is ever present in Razumov's psyche. So even after Haldin is caught and hanged, he remains alive in Razumov's mind as his double and also as the psychological force that gradually drives him to a confession of his moral guilt and to self-reconciliation. Very early in the narrative, Haldin himself forewarns his haunting doubling of Razumov when he eerily declares that his soul will continue to live and fight even after his death:

> "Look here, brother! Men like me leave no posterity, but their souls are not lost. No man's soul is ever lost. It works for itself – or else where would be the sense of self-sacrifice, of martyrdom, of conviction, of faith – the labours of the soul? What will become of my soul when I die in the way I must die – soon – very soon perhaps? It shall not perish. Don't make a mistake, Razumov. This is not murder – it is war,

> war. My spirit shall go on warring in some Russian body till all falsehood is swept out of the world." (25-26).

At the time of making this declaration Haldin does not know that Razumov will give him up, and he has in fact come to him to solicit his help for his (Haldin's) elaborate escape plan. With this positive expectation of help and without any suspicion of Razumov's repulsion at his act of murder, Haldin debunks the possibility of perceiving his act of assassination as murder and asserts that he is engaged in war. From this assertion, he hauntingly declares that even after he dies his spirit will prevail in this war by fighting through some Russian body. Full of dramatic irony, this wistful declaration foreshadows not only his imminent death following Razumov's betrayal, but also his choice of Razumov as the 'Russian body' that the spirit embodies in order to continue in his war against falsehood. And this he does by remaining seared in Razumov's mind even before and after his death. In so embodying Razumov, Haldin transcends the physical and, becoming no more than a ghost, he occupies a space of spectrality from which he has not only transformed permanently into Razumov's double but has also become his conscience. In thus doubling Razumov with Haldin, Conrad projects unto Razumov an Otherness that is characterised by spectrality. Consequently, Razumov is constantly psychologically haunted by the image of Haldin.

INTIMATIONS OF THIRD SIGHT

In 'The Missing Center', Eloise Knapp Hay argues that in *Under Western Eyes*, the author leaves his overall meaning to be determined by the reader thus resulting in a constantly shifting centre of the narrative unity of the text (128). This additionally denies the reader the security of non-complicitous observation as the narrative "obliquely examines [the] sickness of soul, yet finds it as much in the beholder, the 'Western eyes' of the narrator, as in the Russians under his observation" (128-129). While in her statement, she identifies the beholder as "the 'Western eyes' of the narrator" (128), I argue that the act of beholding certainly goes beyond the narrator and encompasses also the reader who has the advantage of observing not only the characters under the observation of the narrator but also the narrator himself. Throughout the narrative, the narrator affirms in various ways that his story is intended for "Western readers" (99), insisting that it is "a Russian story for Western ears" (140). Through his assertions, therefore, he aims at the sole

comprehension of the Western reader to whom he delivers a story of circumstances, words and actions that are "vague" to his own "Western mind and […] Western sentiment" (145).

As a result of his admission that the story is ambiguous even to him, the effect of his narrative is that it "asserts the fallibility of all that it seems to assert" (Frank Kermode, 134). In effect, he confesses to his own unreliability, and just as the "Western mind and […] sentiment" of the narrator cannot be trusted neither can his "Western eyes". Besides, the narrator's perspective on the actions, events, thoughts and claims of his characters cannot be taken for granted and impressed upon the reader as the ultimate perspective since the narrator himself is rather unreliable (Carabine, 210; Nünning, 60). It is this unreliability that causes us to approach the narrative from other possible perspectives through "an interpretation of which [the narrator] is unconscious" (Carabine, 209). From this possibility one is able to view the narrative from other interpretations of what the narrator describes as "things Russian" (314). For, as readers, we have the benefit of a three-way vision – reader, narrator, character – into the details presented to us in the narrative.

First of all, we are made to see things from the narrator's perspective, a perspective which is itself sporadic at best. For the narrator tries to give the impression of his narrative as unfolding within a temporal parallel to the events he describes. However, we are not defrauded into that confusion as we follow the narrative, for the narration always comes to life anew with the reader, and we are able to perceive a temporal disjunction between the events surrounding the central character, the encounters these result in, and his overall experience of the culminating effect that these produce on him. Much of this results from the fact that right from the onset, the main character is presented to the reader through a blurring of the narrator's professed unaffected perspective with the author's strong political opinions. As Thomas Cousineau observes, the novel may be summed up as "an expression of Conrad's political vision" (Cousineau 27), through which he deploys of the narrative's "political elements" to dramatize "implicit psychological concerns" (Cousineau 27). Arguing that the novel lends itself equally to forms of interpretation that simultaneously draw on its political as well as its psychological aspects, Cousineau states that the layering of these two in the novel makes "the disentangling of political and psychological motivations extremely difficult" (28). This entangling of the political and the psychological legitimises a reading that vetoes a restriction of the narrative to 'things Russian' or even to 'Western' scrutiny, thus opening it up to universal exploration.

Thus, from the perspective of the conscientious reader, it is possible to perceive how social and political developments cohere across geographical space and time as we connect this story of Russia to the narrator's Western Europe where he confirms that "certain tones of cynicism and cruelty, of moral negation, and even of moral distress" have long since been "already silenced" (140). This similarity insinuated between the narrative's depiction of an oppressive Russian imperialism and the historical past of Western Europe prefigures a post-colonial universality of the reality of constructing an identity through self-assertion, and free from social conformity. Such a universality is evidenced in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, which, as Caminero-Santangelo observes, is an adaptation of Conrad's novel to a peculiarly African (Kenyan) context, thus "undermining, in the process, the notion of essential national character embedded in *Under Western Eyes*" (Caminero-Santangelo 144).

Related to the reader's universalist perspective is the perspective that the main character himself provides in his peculiarly individualistic struggle. In Avrom Fleishman's opinion, the novel may be interpreted as an investigation into the proper relationship between an individual and his society (216). From the standpoint of such an analysis, Fleishman argues that in the end Razumov's confession implies that "the extreme individualist becomes integrated with a group at last" (237). This conclusion may be contested on the basis that the grave consequences that Razumov suffers for that confession and his hermit-like isolation as he declines in health contravenes such an assertion of integration. However, the fact remains that the character, in all his manoeuvrings, constantly demonstrates a yearning to belong, to be recognised and to be accepted. Unfortunately, this yearning remains unfulfilled because, as Kaplan points out, in a system marked by social disorder and lawless oppression, the structures necessary for such a fulfilment simply do not exist (Kaplan 108).

At the end of the novel, these three perspectives – narrator, reader, character – combined, provide the comprehensive critical perspective of a thirdsight through which we may conclude that even though Razumov consistently contests his Othering he ultimately remains permanently Othered. He is deaf, "crippled, ill, [and] getting weaker every day". Cared for by Tekla, he lives "not 'in the centre,' but 'in the south'" in a "little two-roomed wooden house, in the suburb of some very small town, hiding within the high plank-fence of a yard overgrown with nettles" (312). Apart from the obvious references to his debilitated condition, his ultimate Otherness is indicated

by the connotations accruing from the references to his living situation: not centre but south – alluding to marginality, little living quarters in small town. This reinforces the idea of marginality through an emphatic use of the diminutive adjectives 'little' and 'very small', which evoke the idea of a scale of comparison. Besides, the semantic properties of the verb 'hide' ('hiding') is highly suggestive of intentionality, a deliberate effort at concealment, an idea which is further consolidated by the mental picture painted of an overgrown yard surrounded by a high-plank fence. In this state of existence, Antonovna states that he has ideas and talks well.

Considering that he is deaf, he can no longer hear and be influenced by what others think of him or expect of him. He, however, continues to talk, advancing his own ideas to whoever will care to listen. While his physical predicament traps him in the debilitating Otherness of disability, his mind seems to remain active in its ability to propound ideas. Yet, these only remain ideas as in his debility he cannot act on them even if he may have wanted to. This recalls the earlier allusion to 'spectral ideas' and 'disembodied aspirations'. Thus, in his persistent mental activity translated into his presentation of ideas, he continues to contest the Otherness of physical incapacitation. Considering this final portrayal of Razumov from the perspective of my concept of thirdsight, which I expound in my chapter on *Lord Jim*, and which I define to constitute all the visual images and instances both presented to and evoked in our mind's eye as we read a given text, I assert that the combined images we form of Razumov from the narrator's description of his final condition is of an Othered individual who is frozen in the contestation of his Otherness.

CONCLUSION

THE OTHER, THE ALIEN, THE EXILED

This chapter wraps up my analysis of Conrad's Others in the previous chapters by demonstrating how the motif of Otherness is further consolidated in his writing by being extended beyond the trope of difference to encompass a state of alienation and exile. For this final discussion, I, first of all, summarise salient aspects of Conrad's own life that reveal his natural tendency towards, and his overall appreciation of the notions and states of alienation and exile that he then imputes to his Others. I then go further to briefly establish how the conditions of alienation and exile are enacted by his Othered characters in the three novels, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes*. I conclude by asserting that as James Wait, Jim, and Razumov gradually transform into complete Others, their states of Otherness become even further reinforced by the fact that they also gradually transform from potential social beings to undeniable social outcasts. I further emphasise that their final states of physical exile are only really the result of a psychological process of alienation that they personally engage in as they systematically break away from the established social structures in which they find themselves.

I

Identity counts for much in Joseph Conrad's writing. Whether it be the identity of the Self or of the Other, who represents a deviation from the Self by dint of being different. This preoccupation with identity gives rise to Conrad's abiding concern with difference, especially in relation to the Other through whom he always depicts the complex nuances intrinsic in the character of the subject. With an acute interest in representing the Other as bearing an essentially complex personality, Conrad demonstrates that human qualities progressively change as the subject is always in a state of becoming and so never determinedly fixed. This perception of the nature of the human subject was firmly rooted in the fact that Conrad himself was constantly plagued by the need to work out the specificity of his own subjectivity, having become the hapless victim of a turbulent history which "offered him only a stunted, incomplete legacy of national identity,

dissipated in an obscure and chaotic world" (Said 38). Throughout this study and focusing on a selection of his writing, I have suggested that Conrad constantly casts his protagonists as Others in relation to various subjects in his texts. Importantly, the subjects against whom his Othered characters are differentiated may themselves be Others. On the other hand, they may embody a dominant force that could very well be as abstract as an idea, such as a moral ideal or an expected mode of conduct. Conversely, that hegemonic force could also be precariously epitomised in some individual representing a group, a society or an established institution with its accepted norms and practices. Thus, in Conrad's writing, even the very essence of the Self is ambivalent. However, with his keen interest in the subject that is different – Other – because it falls short of some preconceived standard, Conrad focuses on demonstrating the intricate nature of even this Other, whose personality is never a given but can be traced as it evolves through a concatenation of setting and events. I conclude this survey by indicating that Conrad's fixity with the Other arises from the fact that he identifies with the Other precisely because the empirical author himself identifies as Other.

Born to Polish parents in a historically contested geographical space that was a part of Poland, was later subsumed under the Russian Empire and is currently identified as Ukraine, Conrad's young life was characterised by instability due to his family's repeated relocation and eventual exile because of his father's political activism. This theme of instability became a marked feature in his life after the death of his parents left him orphaned and in the care of relatives in his eleventh year. Having already moved around quite a bit, in his sixteenth year Conrad, with the blessing of his uncle whose ward he had become, left his native land and headed to Marseilles, France, from where he began to pursue a career at sea. Over the next two decades the would-be writer of intriguing narratives was to experience life at sea as a marine merchant. It is from this experience that he obtained most of the material that he later uses in his writing: character portraits, settings, descriptions of landscapes (or 'spacescapes', to be more precise), and much more. This is very similar to the trajectory of Herman Melville (1819-1891), who travelled extensively and negotiated various Others he encountered during his travels in his works such as Typee, Omoo, and Moby-Dick.

If Conrad's early life in Russian-occupied Poland was unstable, his later life as a young adult at sea would probably have been even more so, judging from the countless descriptions in

his sea-narratives of the tumultuous and precarious nature of sea-life. However, in *A Personal Record*, his assertion that the "sea is strong medicine" (163), suggests that he found solace, stability, and, above all, meaning for his life by dedicating to a career at sea. Therefore, if the restive nature of his formative years left him with a feeling that he lacked what Said has termed "a solid sense of identity" (24), then his life at sea, initiated through France and ending up in England, offered him a transnational fluidity, mobility, and contingency that would prepare him for his later decision to permanently dock his marine career and substitute it for a life of writing. Thus, taken from Said's largely cosmopolitan perspective, the notion that Conrad lacked such a solid sense of identity may be thought of as more liberating rather than as a lacuna in his character. From this multi-faceted background, it becomes clearly evident that by the time Conrad begins a career in writing, he embodies "in his persona the paradox of identity" (Sewlall,191), a condition that serves as an index to his persistent engagement in his writing with "the whole mechanism of existence" (Richard Curle 25). Even though he negotiates his concern with existence through the portrayal of his characters, the fact that this negotiation also invariably represents his own struggles has been argued out extensively in Said's *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*. Said also strongly indicates that through all his writing. Conrad draws on a "sense of *vécu*" (8) that demonstrates the experience of an "existential reality" (9) resulting from the development of "a partnership between himself and the external world" (9). Thus, his writing denotes a "dialectic" that constitutes the "full exposition of his soul to the vast panorama of existence it has discerned outside of itself" (9). By this, we certainly do not assume that Said implies that Conrad has literally lived out the experiences of every single character portrayed in his writing. Rather, we deduce that through a psychological engagement with the characters he creates, Conrad is able to depict "a conviction of [his] fellow-men's existence strong enough to take upon itself a form of imagined life clearer than reality and whose accumulated verisimilitude of selected episodes puts to shame the pride of documentary history" (Conrad, *A Personal Record* 35). In his effort to create such imagined lives that are "clearer than reality" in his writing, Conrad draws out from within himself an Other that he can recognise in others, or put differently, he identifies in his Others traits and tendencies that he can readily recognise in himself.

Thus, through his writing, Conrad formulates and makes sense of his own identity, which he attempts to rescue from the instability that has marked the greater half of his life and that persistently haunts him even in his later life. Nevertheless, he also demonstrates through the

symbolic fluidity of his representations the richness of his cosmopolitan experience over the precariousness of his earlier instability. Defined at once by this instability and by his cosmopolitanism, Conrad, while piecing together his own personality through the autobiographical scripting of his memories in *A Personal Record*, admits himself that he is a "haunted man" (25) whose hope is that from his writing "there may emerge at last the vision of a personality; the man behind the books […], a coherent, justifiable personality both in its origin and in its action" (16). On the evidence of this, I suggest that, singularly guided by this purpose, Conrad imbues his fictional characters with credible natures that however reflect his own struggle for a coherence and comprehension of personality. In effect, his writing bears the burden of existentialism, both on an intrapersonal and on a relational level. For through his writing, we observe that Conrad consistently grapples with the philosophical deliberation of any sets of conventions guided by a general notion of authenticity that provide a means to understand the human subject. So, from his existential view on the condition of the human subject, Conrad demonstrates that, valid as the perspectives of truth (encapsulated in the sciences such as psychology) and morality (determined by notions of what is good and right) may be, they are not enough to provide an insight into the nature or place of his subjects within different social contexts.

In the vein of this existentialism, Conrad's writing reveals a desperate need for his characters to situate themselves within, or in other words to find their place in their milieu through extreme exertion towards the assertion of their personal identities. With regard to this, Said emphasises that

> [Conrad's writing] always had one end in view – the achievement of character – and his fiction is a vital reflection of his [own] developing character. The mechanisms of existence discernible in [his writing] are Conrad's portrayal of himself in the process of living. They are sections of a long drama in which the arrangements of setting, act, and actor are Conrad's consciousness of himself in the struggle toward the equilibrium of character. (13)

While I agree with Said that Conrad's writing was his way of finding himself and developing his own character, I also suggest that a further function of his writing was to enable him to work through a politics of identity which invariably beset his own sense of belonging and becoming throughout his life. By a 'politics of identity', I mean the different impressions made, politically

and culturally, on Conrad's life and the various attachments that he later developed to his self-identity influenced by his varied experiences while he remained unable to completely shake off the marks left upon him, both psychologically and culturally, by his early history. This is marked, first, by the fact that he grew up in a Poland that was partitioned by Austria, Prussia and Russia, and that subsequently struggled for independence from Russian occupation and domination. When he later left Poland, he developed a marine career under French influences and then much later decided to naturalise and build a career in writing as an Englishman. Secondly, the activism of his parents during his childhood years meant that Conrad experienced, quite early, the vagaries of exile, becoming himself permanently exiled, spiritually and physically, from Poland. These developments over the course of his life invariably left Conrad with the anxiety of a fluid identity that made him neither wholly one thing nor the other, and that he struggled to shape into a distinctive form. This anxiety is expressed by Conrad himself as he engages with his life, past and present, through his writing. However, as discussed by theorists such as Said and Bhabha, such a fluidity of identity also gives force to a liberating moment through which a completely radical identity may emerge. Conrad testifies to the effect of such a liberating moment in his author's note to *Under Western Eyes* when he declares an effort to achieve a "detachment from all passions, prejudices, and even from personal memories" (*UWE* 7). In a further repudiation of the angst that may beset his identity, I find that, Conrad. in the totality of his writing depicts that his "greatest anxiety" is to be able to "strike and sustain the note of scrupulous impartiality" (*UWE* 7), especially, in the treatment of his characters. In connection with this need to observe such fairness, he further states that he feels thus obliged because it is "imposed on [him] historically and hereditarily, by the peculiar experience of race and family" (7). In relation to this, I read 'historically' as referring to Conrad's own experience of life under political domination and then later as a self-imposed exile. And I interpret 'hereditarily' as drawing attention to the fact of his parents' exile and early deaths due to their active protest against political domination. To navigate through this personal history in order to arrive at a meaningful idea of personal identity, Conrad's writing is as much a dialogue with himself as it is with others, and his concern for an 'impartiality' of representation, whether he successfully achieves it or not, indicates a guiding ethics that encompasses his efforts. This notion of dialoguing through his writing has been explored time and again in various critical works on Conrad: Said (2008) has examined this by reading Conrad's fiction through his letters while Keith Carabine (1991), David Smith (1991), Yael Levin (2011)

and Jeremy Hawthorn (1990) among others have discussed this with specific reference to one or others of Conrad's fictional works.

Several critical essays have thus referred to Conrad as an exile expressing his inalienable eastern sentiments in the western language of his chosen country of exile. Moreover, from Conrad's personal letters, sufficient evidence abounds that despite his effort to express himself as best he could in the most acceptable English structure, he was always reminded of his foreignness as he struggled with the constant awareness of being a "self-conscious foreigner writing of obscure experiences in an alien language" (Said, 4). This awareness was accentuated by his apparently very strong Polish accent when he spoke English, a trait that he shares with Nabokov who, like Conrad, would become another master stylist of written English despite his strong Russian accent. Besides, Said further cites Conrad's multi-layered identity as he points out that his stilted writing style is a reflection of the "difficulties of an overwhelmingly untidy existence as a French-speaking, self-exiled, extremely articulate Pole, who had been a sailor and was now, […] a writer" (4). For Conrad, this plurality of identity and the fact that he is always considered foreign, no doubt, impose on him the greater need to better understand and represent others. In fact, he himself draws attention to his indistinct identity in his letter to his friend Edward Garnett where he states: "You always remember that I am a Slav (it's your *idée fixe*) but you seem to forget that I am a Pole" (qtd. in Said 63). Besides, he also calls attention to his foreignness when he writes to his aunt Marguerite Poradowska: "English is … still a foreign language to me, requiring an immense effort to handle" (qtd. in Said, 63). Thus, while living in self-exile, it is evident that Conrad, throughout his writing life, is constantly aware of his foreignness, of the fact of being an alien, of not belonging in the social space in which he chooses to locate himself. In effect, he is invariably marked by the two permanent facts of his life – exile and alienation, which along with the haunts of his past and the challenges of his present, feature as prominent leitmotifs marking his represented Others.

II

Each of the texts included in this study reveal that Conrad's protagonists, who are progressively Othered, are also depicted as experiencing varying forms of exile and alienation in diverse yet similar ways. In the *Nigger of the Narcissus*, James Wait, whose antithetical nature vacillates between victim and demon, remains enigmatic to his fellow shipmates to the very end. In effect,

they are unable to really accept him as one of them and so they alienate him as a result. If we take a final look at the novel through the lenses of 'exile' and 'alienation,' what becomes even clearer through the portrayal of Wait's character is Conrad's subtle argument that the dreadful isolation of the individual soul is central to the notion of man, and to the idea of what it means to be identified as socially belonging. Thus, we become more keenly aware of that which Wait loses sight of: that what is most vital to one's existence is the achievement of solidarity with other men, and that self-identification and knowledge are attained through fellowship with others. The realisation of this fundamental truth, producing discernment and humility in the individual, is the first step to overcoming the threat of exclusion associated with the insinuations of exile and alienation adduced in the text. In effect, Wait's failure to achieve such communion results in his ostracization to the extent that he is depicted as an Other within his universe. In this state, he loses touch with the rest of mankind in his microcosmic world because, in failing to identify with them, he also fails to identify his place amongst them, developing a more malevolent character as he fails to obtain social acceptance.

A similar craving for social acceptance is replicated in *Lord Jim* where we observe the protagonist striving to achieve an imagined moral ideal through social approval. As he consistently fails in this enterprise due to his inability to take timeous actions or decisions, he ends up permanently living in the shadow of his failures and regrets. As we look at the novel from the perspective of 'exile' and 'alienation,' it becomes evident that this state of an eclipsed existence predicates Jim's gradual withdrawal from a needful social communion with others to a psychological existence in which his sole frame of reference is his heroic ideal fed by his heroic fantasies. Thus, we already perceive his exclusion from society as he takes on, in essence and in reality, a virtual existence that alienates him from the rest of mankind. Ultimately, in his desire to disprove his failure, mostly to himself but also to Marlow whose unrelenting interest in him gives him the benefit of the doubt and makes him eager to show himself capable, Jim gradually retreats into a remote and unknown territory. By withdrawing in this way, it is evident that his mental state of exile manifests physically through his relocation into obscurity. In effect, Jim's self-exile to Patusan also implies that he becomes ostracised, as Patusan assumes the aspect of a dream world where he is able to accomplish his heroic fantasies. However, stark reality hits him with the return of his fears and a repeat, and reminder, of his failure when his dream-world collides with the real world through the interception of the rogue pirate, Gentleman Brown. This collision causes his

world, his dreams and his achievements to collapse around him, resulting in his death which marks his permanent elimination from a much-craved idealistic social existence. In effect, it becomes evident that, in his progressive exile and alienation, Jim does not only retreat into an other-worldly space, but that, in his death, his alienation becomes reinforced by the fact that he also unites with this other-worldliness as he transforms in nature into a spectral image. By the end of the narrative, even his actual earlier existence is perpetually called into doubt, and he remains some legendary figure existing only in the imagination of Marlow's readers/ -listeners.

Razumov in *Under Western Eyes* similarly transforms into a legendary figure existing on the fringes of his society. Reduced by his incapacitation to an invalid and resigned to his fate as a dying recluse, he survives in a liminal space between life and death, between presence and absence. For even though he is still alive by the end of the narrative, his state of debilitation and his inactivity have ensured that for all his talk, he is nothing more than "a mere talking animal not much more wonderful than a parrot" (11). And even though he seems present, he is absent from the centre of social activity and of philosophical thought that he so yearned to become a part of by aspiring to greatness as a professor. Thus, his marginalised existence reinforces the depiction of him as an exile, and it harks back to the consistent portrayal of him as different throughout the narrative. Those persistent references to his difference confer upon him an alien status which gains in intensity as, in his strife to belong to his society, he ends up being depicted as a misfit whose violent expulsion from that society simultaneously renders him debilitated and impeded.

Consequently, in each of the three novels, it is revealed that the main characters, represented by Conrad as Others, are consolidated in their Otherness by the fact of their exile or alienation. In relation to this, I further argue that a close examination of these characters as exiled subjects also brings to the fore the notion of displacement which allows us to see them as positioned outside, or on the margins, of 'organised' society. In effect, since Wait, Jim and Razumov are unable to fit into or comply with the structures of their organised societies which comprise rules and expectations, they are cast out of them, psychologically and physically. Thus, they experience exile in two phases. In the first phase, they experience psychological exile marked by a complete disconnection between their ideas and expectations of themselves and their societies' ideas of them. In this regard, what the characters think of themselves, and the images they would like to give, or to believe, of themselves are all in their heads while their societies see

them differently. As a result of their illusionary mental self-images that do not match with their real social identities, the characters are unable to properly integrate into their societies and remain estranged. Eventually, as this psychological exile steadily impacts on their real lives it manifests as physical exile characterised by a marginal form of existence or by outright death.

III

From my foregoing argument, I conclude that a reading of Conrad's texts from the perspectives of 'alienation' and 'exile' elucidates that the constructed Otherness of his characters is further underscored by the notion of isolation. As he represents his Others, Conrad stages his subjects as constantly caught in an ambivalent state of fitting or not fitting into a society into which they may gain admittance or from which they may face expulsion based on their ability or failure to construct an identity within the framework of the accepted norms of that society. To the extent that such an ambivalence evokes a paradox of existence faced by these Othered characters, it also draws attention to the substance that forms the major theme of Conrad's writing: the internal and emotional conflicts of the individual in his effort to identify himself within a social structure. Because such inner conflicts are personal in nature, the individual's experience of them becomes an isolating factor as he tragically struggles to resolve the dissonance between himself as an individual and society as a domineering force.

This focus on the lone individual whose inner crises toss him into an ambiguous social existence of solitude fraught with despair is certainly not unique to Conrad as it is quite common in modern fiction. Nevertheless, I highlight it in my closing comments because it harks back to my suggestion of a politics of identity through which a subject would negotiate and come to terms with the varying influences – political, cultural, economic or social – that contribute to the shaping of his character. While these influences may not always be predetermined, anticipated or controlled, they contribute substantially to the formation, indefinite and illimitable, of the subject who, as Conrad demonstrates, has no fixed identity but vacillates between Self and Other and is often caught in an ambivalent, in-between space of both and neither. In addition to this perspective that Conrad's Othered subjects are characterised by ambivalence, I contend that they also bear a universality that inverts the specificity of setting as, in the radicality of their Otherness, they are positioned, whether by choice or circumstantially, outside the realms of structured existence. Thus,

in this study of Conrad's representation of Otherness conducted through an examination of three of his works – *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, and *Under Western Eyes* – I have demonstrated that Conrad does not specifically pin Otherness to any particular race or subject to the exclusion of some presumably 'superior' race or subject. Rather, he uses the same techniques of Othering to indicate such individuals whose emergence of a notion of self clashes with an established system of rules prescribed by a society that necessarily guided by tacit values and is defined by the very power dynamics that construct them as Others.

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«Ich bezeuge mit meiner Unterschrift, dass meine Angaben über die bei der Abfassung meiner Dissertation benützten Hilfsmittel, über die mir zuteil gewordene Hilfe sowie über eine allfällige frühere Begutachtung meiner Dissertation in jeder Hinsicht der Wahrheit entsprechen und vollständig sind.»

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